













*En scul-ty John Bull.*

COWPER.

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM COLLINS GLASGOW

*See, Chas. Auth.*  
1856

POEMS,

BY

WILLIAM COWPER, ESQ.

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

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WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD," AND OTHER POEMS.

FOURTH EDITION.

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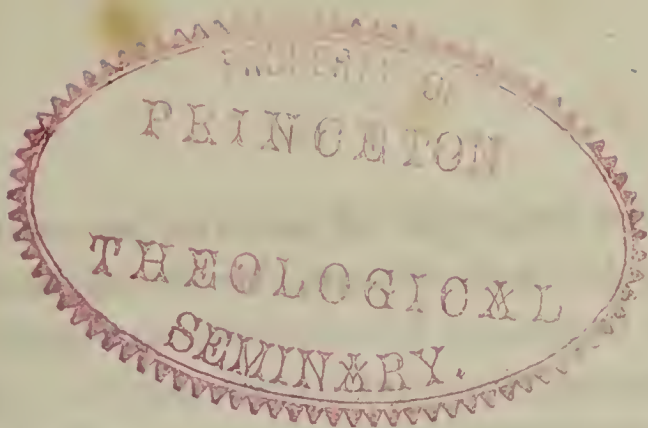
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M.DCCC.XXXIV.







## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

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“ 'Twere new, indeed, to see a bard all fire,  
Touch'd with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,  
And tell the world, still kindling as he sung,  
With more than mortal music on his tongue,  
That He, who died below, and reigns above,  
Inspires his song, and that his name is Love.”

*Table Talk.*

THESE lines occur in the first of COWPER'S published poems, and, from their connection with a review of the themes of his predecessors, as well as from their correspondence with the character of his following works, it may be assumed, that in them the Poet intimated the course which he himself intended to take, while, with the prophetic consciousness of genius, he anticipated his future triumph. Though it cannot be allowed that our Author was so “baptized with the Spirit and with fire,” as to accomplish his purpose with the energy, splendour, and effect, implied in this rapturous presage, yet that he did accomplish it, in a manner peculiarly honourable to himself, will be acknowledged by all who are at once judges of true poetry and true piety. The number of these may be small; but with the multitude of

those who are judges of only the one or the other, Cowper has had the enviable lot to become a favourite, because of his excellence in that which either class can singly appreciate and admire. The close of his greatest work is in harmony with this presentiment in his first. Having finished his "Task," he says, alluding to the same subject, and the same inspiration—

" But all is in his hand, whose praise I seek,  
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,  
If He regard not, though divine the theme;—

\* \* \* \* \*

Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
Whose approbation—prosper even mine."

*The Task, Book vi.*

No formal essay on the genius and writings of Cowper is proposed in the following pages, which, from the limitations under which they have been prepared, must consist of desultory remarks on his principal works, in reference to his intellectual character, his deplorable malady, and the strikingly contrasted eras of his early and his later life. Yet, to do justice to the subject, the critic of Cowper ought to be his biographer; and the productions of his mind ought to be examined chronologically, in connection with the events of his history, there being a beautiful and affecting relationship between his most interesting poems and his personal circumstances, of the same date. It is this that inexpressibly endears Cowper to his readers, as a man of like passions with themselves, while, by the simplicity of his manner, he quietly raises them above their own level, and

makes them feel as though they were of kindred endowments with him. With as little egotism, in the invidious sense of that word, as a human being can betray, he often alludes to incidents in former years, and to present scenes, which render us familiarly and delightfully acquainted with what he was, what he is, and what he aims to be. In fact, he has delineated himself more truly, more vividly, than Romney or Lawrence can have done in their touching memorials of his meek, intelligent, but pensive countenance; though the latter, particularly, has given us the very soul of the poet's features, in lines so few, yet perfect, that we cannot look upon them, without thinking that he *must* have been just such a man as these represent him; for such he has been, to our imagination, ever since we knew him in his works, and formed an idea from them of his personal appearance. Cowper, indeed, is one whom we seem to have known and loved from our youth. We read his thoughts as the thoughts of a friend, in whom every thing is dearer and more engaging to us, than the same in a stranger could be. Yet Cowper must be known well, to be loved heartily. He appears dry, and cold, and even repulsive at first, in his greater poems; nor even in his more exquisite sketches, will the grace, the delicacy, the tenderness, of his humour or his pathos, come out at once. Familiarity, however, with him, instead of breeding contempt, attaches us more and more to his company, while it more and more elevates his peculiar talents in our esteem. There are few compositions, either in prose or rhyme, that will mend so much, on repeated

perusal, as Cowper's, and none that will wear better in the memory, or take stronger hold upon the affections.

A brief outline of our Author's story may be useful for reference in the subsequent strictures on the character of his mind and his writings.

WILLIAM COWPER was the son of a clergyman, allied to a noble family. He lost his mother at an early age, and soon after her death was removed from his father's house, and placed at Westminster School. Here he continued till he had reached his eighteenth year. The honours and fortunes of several of the most illustrious of his ancestors, having been derived from their connection with the administration of justice, he also was doomed to study the law, as a profession, with the prospect of preferment through his family interests. Accordingly, he was articled for three years to an attorney, and actually served out his term; though, from a letter of his own to Lady Hesketh, we learn that he and the future Lord Chancellor, (Thurlow,) who was his companion, mispent their time as pleasantly as two youths of such promise could desire. The talents of each, in the sequel, raised him to pre-eminence in the path of distinction which he chose; but the contrast of their fortunes was no less singular than the coincidence. Thurlow rose to wealth, power, and glory, unrivalled in their combination, during his lifetime; but when death had shorn him of those of his honours that were mortal, it extinguished three-fourths, at least, of the splendour attached to his name. Cowper emerged, in the middle stage of life, from obscurity and inaction,

and, though the season of enterprise and hope might be imagined past, succeeded in gaining a poet's reputation, even at a time when poetry was little regarded. This he achieved by one victorious effort of mind,\* in a lucid interval of comparative peace, amidst a life of despondency. Without this golden occasion, all the other fruits of his genius might have fallen to the ground, ungathered by the public, because, like his first miscellaneous volume, it is probable that they would have failed to attract that attention, which, once obtained, has insured their acceptance with all who can enjoy unsophisticated verse, in alliance with pure and undefiled religion. But the felicity was transient; no after exertion advanced his fame; he continued in retirement, and though the kindness of many friends added comforts to his declining days, he languished in circumstances barely above poverty, and at length died—for "wealth," by the royal bounty, came literally to him "a day too late"—under the darkest cloud that could cover the brightness of an immortal spirit, before its departure from the body. Death, which *reduced* Thurlow to the standard of his *intellect* alone, among the illustrious of his age, *exalted* poor Cowper to the standard of *his*, and made him as much greater in the eye of posterity than the Chancellor now appears, as the latter was greater than he in the sight of their contemporaries. But this is digression.

After Cowper had fulfilled his clerkship, he entered upon those studies which were to qualify him

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\* The Task.

gaiety, perceptible in all his works, was combined in him with a constitutional disposition to gloom and melancholy, inaccessible to comfort, and invincible by reason; while one of the clearest, strongest, and most acute understandings with which man had ever been gifted, though in no other point vulnerable, was every moment in danger of being prostrated, through all its operations, by one besetting infirmity—an infirmity so exquisitely irrational, that it owned no coherence with any thing which he either knew by experience, or believed upon evidence. Satire was his peculiar forte; but it was the satire of pleasantry, rather than of scorn or indignation. His imagination was playful, and easily delighted with any thing innocently ludicrous; but when roused into “noble rage,” he could exchange the shafts of Apollo for the bolts of Jove, and wield the lightnings as fearfully, as he sported skilfully with the “sun’s arrows.”

With regard to his malady, there scarcely needs any other proof that it was not occasioned by his religion than this, that the error on which he stumbled was in direct contradiction to his creed. He believed that he had been predestinated to life, yet, under this delusion, imagined, that God, who could not lie, repent, or change, had, in his sole instance, and in one moment, reversed his own decree which had been in force from all eternity. At the same time, by a perversion of the purest principle of Christian obedience, he was so submitted to the will of God, that, to have saved himself from the very destruction which he dreaded, he would not avail him-

self of any of the means of grace, (even presuming they might have been efficacious,) because he believed that they were forbidden to him. Yet, in spite of the self-evident impossibility of his faith affecting a sound mind with such an hallucination; though a mind previously diseased might as readily fall into that as any other;—in spite of chronology, his first aberration of reason having taken place before he had “tasted the good word of God;”—in spite of geography, that calamity having befallen him in London, where he had no acquaintance with persons holding the reprobated doctrines of election and sovereign grace;—and, in spite of the fact, utterly undeniable, that, till his spirit was revived by the success of his poetry, the only effectual consolations which he knew, after that first access of insanity, were the consolations of the gospel, at St. Albans, at Huntingdon, and at Olney;—in spite of all these unanswerable confutations of the ignorant and malignant falsehood, the enemies of Christian truth persevere in repeating, “that too much religion made poor Cowper mad.” If they be sincere, they are themselves under the “strong delusion to believe a lie;” and it will be well if it prove not, on their part, a wilful one—it will be well if they have not reached that *last* perversity of human reason, to believe a lie of its own invention.

Which was the happiest period of Cowper’s existence on earth? Unquestionably, when he came from St. Albans to Huntingdon, and during the earlier part of his acquaintance with the Unwins. There, when his soul had escaped, “like a bird

one, who had not suffered the actual agony, could have so revealed its horrors ; every part of the process is beyond invention ; while among the thousands who had endured the like, there could hardly be one Cowper found, who had command of ideas and words, delicate, powerful, and simple, to communicate what he had undergone, while the worm-wood and the gall were yet had in remembrance by him.

It is a little extraordinary, that, haunted as he was, after its *second* access, by this tremendous ailment, more or less to the end of life, there is no distinct allusion, in any of his deliberately published poems, to this bosom-mystery of wo, though there are frequent unexplained intimations of some sorrow that bowed down his spirit. Much less is there discernible any occasional defect of intellectual energy, to comprehend and elucidate whatever he pleased to examine and set forth. Indeed, if there be one pre-eminent quality of these writings, it is that marked good sense which has recommended them to persons who have otherwise little relish for poetical beauties ; and it is the same good sense, in unison with poetical beauties, which has recommended them even to infidels, who hated the Author's religion, just so far as they deemed it the religion of Christ ; for by these every other faith is most liberally tolerated. No poet whatever has found readers, enthusiastic readers, of a greater variety of classes of mankind. This, of course, is attributable to the varied excellencies of his verse and prose equally ; the latter, as prose, being of the purest standard, both in



thought and diction, and, like his verse, betraying neither imbecility nor eccentricity.

Though Cowper was born a poet, if ever man was born one, and early displayed his talent, yet, like a nestling-bird, fledged at the end of summer, scarcely had he learned to sing and fly, before his wing was moulted, and his voice lost; nor, till after a long winter of silence and dreariness, did he again essay his powers, when warmed and quickened into rapture by an unexpected spring. Between the ages of fourteen and thirty-three, though living in companionship with the principal wits of the age, he appears to have produced nothing but an occasional trifle. The only piece of genuinely original character, chosen for its own sake, are the blank verses, composed in his eighteenth year, "on finding the heel of an old shoe," in which the very style and tone of quaint and grave morality, that distinguish "The Task," are developed, and shown to be the "mother-tongue" of his muse. The following passage might have been penned the same day with the Sofa.

" This ponderous heel of perforated hide  
Compact, with pegs indented, many a row,  
Haply (for such its massy form bespeaks)  
The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown  
Upbore : on this supported oft, he stretched,  
With uncouth strides, along the furrowed glebe,  
Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time,  
(What will not cruel time?) or a wry step,  
Severed the strict cohesion ; when, alas !  
He, who could erst, with even, equal pace,  
Pursue his destined way, with symmetry,

And some proportion formed, now, on one side,  
 Curtailed and maimed, the sport of vagrant boys,  
 Cursing his frail supporter, treacherous prop !  
 With toilsome steps, and difficult, moves on."

The two hymns which he wrote after leaving St. Albans, with about sixty others, marked C. in the Olney Collection, are nearly the whole of the exercises in verse which have been preserved between that time and the publication of his first volume in 1782. It seems strange, in this precocious age, when nobody that can count his fingers, and rhyme at the end of them, withholds his most jejune and casual performances from the press, that one of the greatest poets—one of the few who appear but at particular eras, and are destined to make such eras—should have waited till he was past middle life, before he discovered the hidden treasures of his mind, or, at least, before he began to work in earnest, and bring them forth to day; having been, till then, content to pick up and polish such specimens as lay scattered on the surface, beneath his feet, or offered themselves to his hand, as pledges of the wealth within his reach, whenever he should please to dig for it in the mine.

Of the hymns, it must suffice to say, that, like all his best compositions, they are principally communings with his own heart, or avowals of personal Christian experience. As such, they are frequently applicable to every believer's feelings, and touch unexpectedly the most secret springs of joy and sorrow, faith, fear, hope, love, trial, despondency, and triumph. Among those which allude to infirmities,

the most difficult to be described, but often the source of excruciating anguish to the tender conscience—what thousands daily suffer, and are sometimes tempted to think that they suffer alone—may be mentioned, Book I. Hymns 64\* and 67,† also Book III. Hymns 24‡ and 28.§ The 72|| Hymn of Book I. is written with the confidence of inspiration and the authority of a prophet. Hymn 96,¶ Book I. is a perfect allegory in miniature, without a failing point or confusion of metaphor, from beginning to end. Hymn 51,\*\* Book III. presents a transformation which, if found in Ovid, might have been extolled as the happiest of his fictions. The action, imagery, and scene, in the second and third verses, are certainly not exceeded by any thing of the same character in the *Metamorphoses*. Hymn 12th,†† Book II. closes with one of the hardest figures to be met with out of the Hebrew Scriptures. The subject is, the prayer of pious parents for their young children. None but a poet of the highest order could have presented such a groupe as the following, without bombast or burlesque :—

“ Lord, we tremble, for we know  
 How the fierce malicious foe,  
*Wheeling round his watchful flight,*  
*Keeps them ever in his sight.*

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\* “ The Lord will happiness divine  
 On contrite hearts bestow,” &c.

† “ My God, how perfect are thy ways,” &c.

‡ “ The Saviour hides his face,” &c.

§ “ Lord, who hast suffered all for me,” &c.

|| “ As birds their infant brood protect,” &c.

¶ “ Thy mansion is the Christian’s heart,” &c.

\*\* “ I was a grovelling creature once,” &c.

†† “ Gracious God, our children see,” &c.

Spread thy pinions, King of kings !  
 Hide them safe beneath thy wings ;  
 Lest the ravenous bird of prey  
 Stoop, and bear the brood away."

Verse cannot go beyond this, and painting could not approach it.

Hymn 38,\* Book II. is in a strain of noble simplicity, expressive of confidence the most remote from presumption, and such as a heart at peace with God alone could enjoy, or utter. Hymn 55,† Book II. —who can read and understand this, without feeling as if he could, in such a moment, forsake all, take up his cross, and follow that Saviour, who

“ ——— longs to be baptized with blood ?”

Hymn 15,‡ Book III. is a lyric of high tone and character, rendered awfully interesting by the circumstances under which it was written—in the twilight of departing reason. The 19th§ Hymn, in the same Book, is a model of tender pleading, of believing, persevering prayer in trouble ; and that which follows,|| (a brief parody on Bunyan’s finest passage,) is admirable of its kind. The reader might imagine himself Christian on his pilgrimage, “the triumph and the trance” are brought so home to his own bosom.

But while Cowper, in association with his friend,

\* “ My song shall bless the Lord of all,” &c.

† “ The Saviour, what a noble flame  
 Was kindled in his breast,” &c.

‡ “ God moves in a mysterious way,” &c.

§ “ God of my life, to thee I call,” &c.

|| “ My soul is sad, and much dismayed,” &c.

the Rev. John Newton, was thus delightfully engaged, a second visitation of his tremendous malady brought him down from the mount of vision into the valley of humiliation, there to be haunted with unreal fears and hideous imaginings, which never thenceforward entirely left him. On emerging after a long eclipse, from this "blackness of darkness," though the true light never shone again upon him, in this world, "to the perfect day," he was encouraged to attempt poetical composition on a larger scale than heretofore, and with a direct view to publication. It was a happy suggestion of his friends; and though he undertook it with no sanguine ideas of success, yet that secret hope, which, almost unconsciously, exists in the noblest and humblest of gifted minds, feeling within them powers, as yet unproved, to influence other minds—that hope cheered him in his solitary labours, to which the fixed object of writing what was to be read in print, not only held, but helped and drew him forward till the contemplated work was done. The volume was published in course, but, with all its originality of style, attracted very little notice. Nor was this surprising; for verse of any kind was scarcely a marketable commodity in those days, neither were his subjects or his sentiments calculated to dazzle or please on the sudden.

About this time, Cowper became acquainted with Lady Austen—for his fame, the most auspicious event of his life; since, while the brief but brilliant connection lasted, she was "a spirit of health" to the man, a good genius to the bard, and made the

world her debtor so long as his best strains shall be remembered. Shy as he was, and most shy to the most gay, he was so insensibly and perfectly captivated by her lively company, that, while her presence was a charm to his troubled mind, her voice was an oracle to his muse. The fascination was mutual; but, while both perhaps thought that they were cultivating the purest friendship under heaven—the affection of a brother and a sister—Love, if we may personify it here, taking the disguise of a brother to the one, and that of a sister to the other, before the innocent but fatal imposture was discovered, had slain the peace of each, and separation, immediate, decisive separation, became necessary. There was no other alternative, unless Cowper had made a sacrifice, which he never could have made without rendering her with whom he parted, and her to whom he clung, supremely miserable, by plunging *himself* into irremediable despair; for it is probable that inveterate insanity would have been the issue to him, had the affection, which he imagined he bore to Lady Austen as a sister, triumphed, in its real form, over that which he bore to Mrs. Unwin, in whatever character he loved *her*.

They parted;—but to Lady Austen, Cowper owed the most brilliant lucid interval of his life in that shade, which the day-spring from on high never visited with benigner illumination. To her also the gratitude of ages will be gladly conceded, for having inspired his finest productions. Yet their friendship did not live to see its own immortal offspring born from the press in 1785. They had met for the last

time on earth before the "Task" appeared; and had not the plaudits of the public roused the unhappy poet, and charmed him too, with the voice of praise, to which none can be entirely deaf, in whom "the last infirmity of noble minds" is not extinct—it is difficult to suppose, that his faculties would have survived the shock of a bereavement, by which all that was most generous and tender in his nature, was wrought to the last agony of suffering.

By the success of "The Task," and the excitement of the new world in which he began to live and breathe—though it was but the old world, in the concerns of which he now took an interest, unfelt before, since he resolutely left it,—Cowper was emboldened to undertake an incomparably greater achievement—the translation of the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer into blank verse. This was completed, in its first form, in the course of six years, and published in two volumes, quarto; but to the end of his life, and even under the last long and impenetrable gloom that enwrapt his spirit, till it escaped into the brightness of the invisible world, his principal occupation was upon the works of the Grecian bard, which he revised, renewed, touched, and re-touched, in his endlessly elaborated version, even when he could attach himself to no other employment, and had lost the sense of every joy on earth, or hope in heaven. It has often been regretted, that, instead of this labour in vain, as it seems to many, he had not spent an equal portion of time and talent on original composition. The regret is at least as much bestowed in vain as was that labour; for there is no well-

founded reason to suppose, from the momentary jeopardy in which he lived, of being plunged into sudden, irremediable despondence, that, if he had been otherwise occupied, he could have maintained a comparable measure of health and cheerfulness; or that he would have produced any work of equally captivating character, with that which had been wrought out of his heart and fancy, in the golden days of Lady Austen's influence. A second Task, under whatever title, like all second parts, would have been deemed a falling off from the first, and it is surely better to feel that this consummate piece is too short, than even that it is long enough. Yet, long enough it is, from the very cause why any work of real genius must be so, which fills, engages, and transports the readers to the end, leaving behind no sense of defect in itself, but only an eager desire for more of the same kind—a desire which, if met, instead of being satisfied, would be satiated.

To Cowper's translation of Homer, we are beholden not only for the pleasure which a perusal will afford to reasonable and patient readers,—such, indeed, it will abundantly gratify,—but we may attribute to its happy possession of his mind, all the beautiful and inimitable letters which appear in his correspondence, during the progress of that work. The toil of daily turning over the thoughts of the greatest of poets, in every form of English that his ingenuity could devise, occupied, for many years, that very portion of his time which, with a person of no profession, and having no stated duties to perform, lies heaviest upon the spirit. The salutary exercise



of his morning studies, made him relish with keener zest the relaxation of his social hours, or those welcome opportunities of epistolary converse with the absent, in which it is evident that much of the little happiness allowed to him lay: he is never more at home, consequently never more amiable, sprightly, entertaining, and even poetical, than in his correspondence, when he pours out all the treasures of his mind, and the affections of his heart, upon the paper which is to be the speaking representative of himself, to those whom he loves.

It is no part of this Essay to criticise Cowper's Homer, or to bring it into competition either with the original, or the antecedent versions of Chapman, Ogilvie, Hobbes, or Pope. Whatever may be the comparative defects of Cowper's translation, the work itself is one which no ordinary poetical power could have accomplished. There are many passages in it, which leave Pope's brilliant paraphrases of the corresponding lines as far behind them, as our Author's may be deemed below the original. But the general comparison between the two English Homers of the last century is always made exceedingly to the disadvantage of the latter; not altogether, nor even in any considerable degree, from its positive inferiority, but from early prepossession in favour of the former. The fact is, that translations of classic authors, except on their first appearance, are very little read, except by youth, and by these, often before they are sufficiently familiar with the originals to enjoy their surpassing excellence. With such readers, the first version of a favourite poet, if it

have high merit, so fills the imagination, unoccupied before, with the story, characters, and embellishments, all identified with its peculiar phraseology, that even a superior work afterwards, embracing the same subjects, cannot rival it. If, in two of our great seminaries, Cowper's Homer were the reading book of the scholars at the one, and Pope's of those at the other, it is most probable, that the cleverest lads,—those who really enjoyed the poetry of the translation, would, to their lives' end, prefer that which had made the first indelible impression upon their minds; and, in such a case, it would be as difficult to supersede Cowper by Pope, as it is generally to supersede Pope by Cowper. Celebrated as Pope's translation is, it may be questioned whether there are a thousand persons living who have read it through, since they were thirty years of age. As for Cowper's, it is scarcely known now, except as an unsaleable book in the trade catalogues.

Between the school of Dryden and Pope, with their few remembered successors, not one of whom ranks now above a fourth-rate poet,—for Young, Thomson, Goldsmith, Gray, and Collins, though flourishing in the interval, were not of their school, but all, in their respective ways, originals;—between the school of Dryden and Pope, and our undisciplined, independent contemporaries, Cowper stands as having closed the age of the former illustrious masters, and commenced that of the eccentric leaders of the modern fashions in song. We cannot stop to trace the affinity which he bears to either of these generations, so dissimilar from each other; but it would

be easy to show how little he owed to his immediate forerunners, and how much his immediate followers have been indebted to him. All the cant phrases, all the technicalities of the former school, he utterly threw away, and by his rejection of them they became obsolete. He boldly adopted cadences of verse unattempted before, which though frequently uncouth, and sometimes scarcely reducible to rhythm, were not seldom ingeniously significant, and signally energetic. He feared not to employ colloquial, philosophical, judicial idioms, and forms of argument, and illustrations, which enlarged the vocabulary of poetical terms, less by recurring to obsolete ones, (which has been too prodigally done since,) but by hazardous, and generally happy innovations of more recent origin, which have become graceful and dignified by usage, though Pope and his imitators durst not have touched them. The eminent adventurous revivers of English poetry about thirty years ago, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge, in their blank verse trode directly in the steps of Cowper, and, in their early productions at least, were each, in a measure, what he had made them. Our Author may be legitimately styled the father of this triumvirate, who are, in truth, the living fathers of the innumerable race of moderns, whom no human ingenuity could well classify into *their* respective schools.

The death of Cowper occurred in the year 1800, but nothing of a character to influence public taste had proceeded from his pen since 1785, his Homer having been too little noticed to add either to his fame or his authority as a poet. A few brief stric-

tures on his principal works, will best illustrate his peculiar claims to rank among the greatest benefactors of his country, in the peaceful walks of elegant literature.

The larger portion of his first volume\* consists of rhyming pieces in ten-syllable measure. The first of these, entitled *TABLE TALK*, is a dialogue in verse, of which the subjects are chiefly the commonplace politics of the day : and the Author, by an easy pedestrian pace, has got midway through his theme before he kindles into any thing like fury, or betrays any strong symptom of the diviner mood. Then, indeed, comes a glorious burst, in which the patriot, the Christian, and the bard, all unite in a warning, sufficient to alarm the most supine statesman, touching the real perils, and false security, of a nation hastening unconsciously to ruin, through the undermining vices of luxury and licentiousness.

“ They trust to navies, and their navies fail,—  
 God’s curse can cast away ten thousand sail !  
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;  
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;  
 But all they trust in withers, as it must,  
 When He commands, in whom they place no trust.  
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast  
 A long despised, but now victorious, host ;  
 Tyranny sends the chains, that must abridge  
 The noble sweep of all their privilege ;  
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;  
 Slips the slave’s collar on, and snaps the lock.”

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\* The words *first* and *second* volume, in the following pages, refer to the original edition, thus divided, but here collected into one.

Cowper's versification in these ten-syllable rhymes is very irregular, frequently harsh, sometimes heavy, and only occasionally harmonious or fluent. The whole strain of his argumentation is rather rhetorical than poetic; the illustrations, however, are often exceedingly ingenious and sparkling: sentiments with the force of proverbs; couplets with the point of epigrams; similes, which are sometimes allegories, sometimes fables; short dramatic scenes, in which characters, sketched to the life, with a few slight strokes, enter, act, and converse. You see, you hear them, they vanish, and the reader is left alone with the Poet. These embellishments belong nearly as much to his blank verse as to his rhyme; the strictures on versification, its faults, imperfections, and ungraciousness, belong to the latter principally; but whether these deserve to be thus branded, may admit of some difference in opinion. Cowper adopted his system deliberately,—perversely, it may be said,—but in truth, his ear having been unpractised in the artificial construction of verse for many years, might be defective in “nicely discerning” the delicacies of richly melodious numbers, winding through every possible variety of cadence, yet never languishing nor stumbling; never feeble, monotonous, or unnecessarily rugged. A poet, like our Author, who has to form the character of his versification at the age of fifty years, will almost certainly be satisfied with a measure less graceful and flowing, than if he had continued to follow the fine art of thus embodying thoughts, images, and feelings, through the glowing, enterprising days of youth, and “prime of man-

hood, where youth ended.” Besides this, Cowper modelled his metre (so far as he was influenced by any precedent) after Churchill, in preference to Pope. Pope’s reign of fashion in song had declined, and Churchill, coarse, vehement, and sententious, had assumed the dictatorship, while Cowper was yet a young man. The popularity of the former, at the time when the latter was most susceptible of poetical impressions, from another and a master mind, very naturally gave Churchill the ascendancy over his more polished predecessor. But there is an ardour and impetuosity in the rough, bold, powerful numbers of the author of the *Rosciad*, which are seldom perceived in the calmer and more tempered strains of our Author. At the same time, Cowper well knew what good verse ought to be, and no poet has ever more successfully characterized and exemplified its peculiarities and requisites. Compared with the following lines, Pope’s celebrated clause in the “*Art of Criticism*,” (which Dr. Johnson has very honestly criticised,)

“Soft be the strain when zephyr gently blows,” &c.

is mere puerile drivelling:—

“I know the mind, that feels indeed the fire  
 The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,  
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,  
 Whate’er the theme, that others never feel.  
 If human woes her soft attention claim,  
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame;  
 She pours a sensibility divine  
 Along the nerve of every feeling line.  
 But if a deed, not tamely to be borne,  
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,

The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,  
 The storm of music shakes the astonished crowd.  
 So, when remote futurity is brought,  
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,  
 A terrible sagacity informs  
 The poet's heart; he looks to distant storms;  
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers;  
 And, armed with strength surpassing human powers,  
 Seizes events as yet unknown to man,  
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan."

To this may be added a couplet, never excelled in its kind. Contrasting the manly strain which he adopts, with the "creamy smoothness" of small poets, he says,

"Give me the line, that ploughs its stately course,  
 Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force."

The first of these lines gives the launch of the noble bird upon the lake; the second, in its first hemistick, and the gasping cæsura, followed by the hard accented "conquering," intimates to perfection the obstacle of the thwarting current, and the power that overcomes, if not without effort, yet without exhaustion. There is another passage towards the close of this poem, (Table Talk,) commencing thus,

"Nature exerting an unwearied power."

and running through twenty-six lines, in which he displays insurpassable exuberance, beauty, and taste, both in sentiment and diction. Had Cowper's rhymes been all of this order of creation; fruitful as earth, active as fire, fluent as water, free as air, and pure as light, his first volume would not have ap-

peared,—to be seen by no body but his bookseller and his friends. It must, however, be acknowledged, that he rarely rises into such ecstasy.

“THE PROGRESS OF ERROR,” is not a pleasing poem; but there are some singularly ingenious and grotesque ornaments introduced, to set off a harsh train of reasoning, on a very repulsive subject. Among these may be mentioned the portraits of “Folly and Innocence,” of “Gorgonius,” of “the young Nobleman and his Tutor, on the tour of Europe,” &c. The hatching of

“Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid,”

and the propagation of false opinions in the clause,

“No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,  
Till half mankind were like himself possest,” &c.

are of another and severer character.

“And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way,  
Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noon-day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,  
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will;  
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,  
First put it out, then take it for a guide.  
Halting on crutches of unequal size,  
One leg by truth supported, one by lies,  
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,  
Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.”

This is Hogarth himself in verse, attiring melancholy truth in ludicrous fiction. A book of fables, apologues, allegorical pictures, and conversation pieces, more entertaining and instructive than



hasty readers of our Author would imagine, might be selected from these Poems, and the "Task," which is equally rich in such materials. These exquisite little sketches are often almost lost among the didactic reasonings with which they are interwoven. Many of them would be deemed excellent stories, even were they reduced to plain prose.

"TRUTH," is by no means so splendid and powerful a poem as might have been expected. It is, perhaps, too polemical; and though its merits will bear microscopic inspection, they fail to strike the unassisted eye with any extraordinary effect. The characters, however, which appear in the sequel, are admirably delineated. The hermit

"Girt with a bell-rope which the Pope has blessed;"

the Hindoo, kindling

"on his own bare head,  
The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade;"

and the sanctimonious prude,

"Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,  
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips," &c.

are portraits so faithful to poor human nature, arrayed in self-righteousness, that nobody who knows his own face in a looking-glass need doubt the family-likeness.

"EXPOSTULATION" furnishes a fine example of our Author's talent for parable.

"When nations are to perish in their sins,  
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins;—  
The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere  
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,

Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,  
 While others poison what the flock must drink ;  
 Or, waking at the call of lust alone,  
 Infuses lies and errors of his own :  
 His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure ;  
 And, tainted by the very means of cure,  
 Catch from each other a contagious spot,  
 The foul forerunner of a general rot."

Analyze this. A hireling shepherd is appointed to watch a fountain—he falls asleep on the brink—an enemy of his Master comes, and poisons the stream—the flocks drink of it, are infected with disease, and perish miserably. There is even an underplot, in which he himself acts the traitor, and taints the current with his own infusions. Much of this poem is on state-affairs; and political verse (especially that referring to persons and incidents of the day) sooner loses taste and relish than any other. Indeed, its interest is generally factitious; like medicated waters, the spirit is so volatile, that the draught must be taken off at once, and then it is highly exhilarating; but, suffered to stand, it presently becomes as stale as ditch puddle. The *biography of England*, as it may be called, from the couplet,

“ Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,  
 Review thy dim original and prime,”

onward to the line

“ Happy the nation where such men abound,”

is exceedingly spirited and just.

“ HOPE.” These pieces show the themes of con-

versation most frequent in Cowper's home-circle; and they are pretty evidently the records, or rather the results, of arguments held with his friends at Olney, on politics and religion. In the poem just named, the paragraph,

“ Though clasped and cradled in his nurse's arms,” &c.

contains a sprightly, yet affecting illustration of the fact, that *the Man* may be discovered in *the Boy*, though the former is *then* in miniature, and the latter the full size of life. There is a conversation scene, sparkling with pungent pleasantry, which yet cannot be read without shuddering, by any man who will have the courage to think, how many times a-year such dialogues are held by similar characters of every rank, in this Christian country, through the very heart of which lies “ the broad road that leadeth to destruction,” thronged by multitudes, deceived, deceiving others, but most intent on deceiving themselves, like the gentlemen over their wine, in the passage before us:—

“ ‘ Adieu,’ Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips,  
The purple bumper trembling at his lips,” &c.

Cowper delighted to honour good men and good deeds, though such as the world might not deem good in either case. In this poem he mentions the labours of Whitfield at home, and those of the Moravian missionaries in Greenland—the first time that either had flourished in song, and probably the last personages or themes that a courtly poet would have chosen; or even a religious one, not wholly above

the fear and favour of man, might have dared to celebrate. The progress of an awakening, convincing, and converting grace, on the soul of an individual, is very powerfully traced at the close:—

“ If ever thou hast felt another’s pain,” &c.

Cowper spoke from personal knowledge here. Those who mock at such changes, and deem them delusive, because they have not felt the like themselves, are manifestly incompetent judges; since *they* only who have had the experience, can testify to the reality of that which must be proved true by experience alone. A blind man coming into a room, and standing in the midst, may ascertain, by his peculiar modes of observation, the dimensions of the place, perhaps the number of persons present, and the bulk of furniture there; but, because he can do no more, is he to deny, that one who can see, (taking his station,) would be able minutely to describe a thousand particulars else, not only within the walls, but out in the adjacent street, and even in the distant country,—is he to deny this, merely because he himself cannot conceive by what faculty the other distinguishes things, which to him are the same as if they were non-existent? The man naturally blind, may convince himself, by infallible experiments, that others possess a sense which he neither has, nor can comprehend; but he who is spiritually blind, will never believe that there *is* light, which he cannot discern, till the eyes of his own understanding are opened to understand the Scriptures, and his heart humbled to acknowledge the great power of God.

“CHARITY” is a poem of the same family as the foregoing ones, and, like them, wants interest as a whole—is defective in colouring and keeping, though excellent in drawing and design—with particular passages, equal to any thing from the Author’s pen. Such are the strains in which Cowper sings of Liberty. Liberty always inspires him; no sooner does he name it than his spirit goes out into “the highest heaven of invention;” words, images, thoughts of light, life, love, pour upon him, like sunbeams, through an eye-hole in a darkened casement; and he is all himself—all that he ought always to have been.

“O could I worship aught beneath the skies,  
 That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,  
 Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,  
 Built by no mercenary, vulgar hand,  
 With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair  
 As ever dressed a bank, or scented summer air.  
 Duly, as ever on the mountain’s height  
 The peep of Morning shed a dawning light;  
 Again, when evening, in her sober vest,  
 Drew the gray curtain of the fading west,  
 My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,  
 For the chief blessings of my fairest days!  
 But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,  
 But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine;  
 Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly  
 A captive bird into the boundless sky,  
 This triple realm adores thee—thou art come  
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home.”

One of the most pleasing images in these volumes occurs in the context:—

“ That Grief sequestered from the public stage,  
May smooth her feathers and enjoy her cage.”

Every body sees that a bird is pointed out. The cage, the action, the plumage show this—but it is not named. Our amiable Poet is too fond of ridiculing natural and experimental philosophy—in exposing the coxcombs who affect knowledge of this kind, and treating them almost as if all professors were pedants and blockheads alike. The reader is referred to a long passage, from

“ Philosophy, that does not dream or stray;  
Walks arm and arm with Nature all his way,”

to the sixty-sixth line in the sequel, and he will probably think, that though the reasoning and purpose of the poet are right, yet the tone of levity, in such couplets as the following,

“ Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,  
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea,”

throw an air of unmerited ridicule on laudable endeavours to advance useful science. Were this the only sarcasm of the kind in these volumes, it would not have been noticed here; but it is one among many, and an instance or two may be produced hereafter. The fable of the Blind Islanders, which immediately follows, is one of those humorous illustrations, with which grave argument is so frequently relieved in the pages of our poetical polemic. Two perfectly original similes occur a little further on, at the lines, “ So, when the cold, damp, shades of night prevail,” &c. and “ Where stands that monu-

ment of ancient power," &c. These, and indeed all his similes, are peculiarly characteristic of the genius and manner of the Author.

"CONVERSATION" is in a livelier vein than any of the preceding; the versification is more vigorous; wit, humour, and nice discrimination of follies and frailties abound in every paragraph. The Persian, supplicating an interest in the swearer's prayers, is inimitable in arch solemnity and simplicity combined.

"A Persian, humble servant of the sun,  
Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,  
Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,  
With adjurations every word impress,  
Supposed the man a bishop, or, at least,  
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;  
Bowed at the close, with all his graceful airs,  
And begged an interest in his frequent prayers."

The character of the story-teller is conspicuously good. The invective against tobacco includes a singularly ingenious association of ideas, respecting ladies and worms being driven away by the use of it. The description of the visiting party betrays some of the bosom-miseries of human life, amidst all the affectation of enjoyment in polite circles. The scripture-episode of the two disciples going to Emmaus, is tenderly and beautifully told.

"Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,  
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name."

The reader's surprise is electrical, when he finds here, that the querulous interrupter is no better than the ass hunting with the lion—terrible only while

he is hidden; or like the ass in the lion's skin—self-betrayed as soon as he opens his mouth. The “world grown old,” clapping “spectacles on her sagacious nose,” to examine the features of the Christian countenance, and finding it a “mere mask of sly grimace,” is a picture for which the world herself must have sat in person to an artist, expert infallibly to hit off her physiognomy, in all its moral idiotism. By the way, the idiot and the lyre, at the conclusion, must not be overlooked by the admirers of this versatile essay.

“RETIREMENT” is the most thoroughly poetical of the series under examination. Cowper's poetry often seems, indeed, it too often is, ordinary and conversational; but there is no author since Dryden, more purely English in his diction, nor since Pope, more elegant and compact in composition, when he pleases to be so. He has an affluence of terms always at command, but he rarely selects them with much pains, or lavishes them in prodigality of ornament; he can never be suspected of poverty, though he seldom displays riches. In the following quotation we have a proof of consummate skill in combining words and images, and making both express as much meaning, in as small compass as our tongue itself can afford; especially in the lines respecting the minutest wonders of creation, where the verse becomes an intellectual microscope, through which we see the objects with as much accuracy and distinctness, as the optical instrument itself could present them; but without that ineffable horror and shrinking, with which some people gaze through the



latter, on the magnified limbs of animalculæ, converted into “Gorgons, and Hydras, and chimeras dire:”—

“ Then sweet to muse upon his skill displayed  
 (Infinite skill) in all that He has made !  
 To trace in Nature’s most minute design  
 The signature and stamp of power divine,  
 Contrivance intricate, expressed with ease,  
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,  
 The shapely limb and lubricated joint,  
 Within the small dimensions of a point,  
 Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,  
 His mighty work, who speaks, and it is done,  
 The invisible in things scarce seen revealed,  
 To whom an atom is an ample field ;  
 To wonder at a thousand insect forms,  
 These hatched, and those resuscitated worms,  
 New life ordained and brighter scenes to share,  
 Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,  
 Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,  
 More hideous foes than fancy can devise ;  
 With helmet-heads, and dragon-scales adorned,  
 The mighty myriads, now securely scorned,  
 Would mock the majesty of man’s high birth,  
 Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth :  
 Then with a glance of fancy to survey,  
 Far as the faculty can stretch away,  
 Ten thousand rivers poured at his command  
 From urns, that never fail, through every land ;  
 These like a deluge with impetuous force,  
 Those winding modestly a silent course ;  
 The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales ;  
 Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails ;  
 The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,  
 The crescent moon, the diadem of night ;  
 Stars countless, each in his appointed place,  
 Fast anchored in the deep abyss of space—

At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,  
 And with a rapture like his own exclaim,  
 These are thy glorious works thou Source of Good,  
 How dimly seen, how faintly understood!"

Further on, there is another strain of the same high mood, from which a very brief extract must suffice.

"To mark the matchless workings of the power,  
 That shuts within its seed the future flower,  
 Bids these in elegance of form excel,  
 In colour these, and those delight the smell;  
 Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,  
 To dance on earth and charm all human eyes."

Nature, sent forth to dance on the earth, is one of the most glorious figures ever struck out by a poet, in his brightest moments. The hypochondriac patient of Dr. Heberden, in describing whose case the suffering Poet touches more nearly upon his own unutterable malady, than in any other passage published in his life-time,—has frequently been commended with the warmth of sympathy which the perusal cannot fail to awaken. It is remarkable what sharp strokes of satire the Author blends with the pathos of this delineation—yet nothing is more natural. When the heart is most deeply pierced, the fancy is often the most lively, and apt for ingenious sarcasm; starting aside from itself for a moment; striking a wild note or two, in another key; then returning as suddenly to the string on which hang all its sorrows. The statesman's soliloquy, (though a vein of concealed humour, gives the melancholy tone a singular expression,) is delivered in smoother numbers than are generally used by this

poet, but which are perfectly consonant to the character that speaks. The great man's retirement, his rural occupations, enjoyments, weariness, discontent, and return to office, are all described with freedom, spirit, and effect. Irony more poignant cannot be found, than between the lines, "But ask the noble drudge in state affairs," and "Slips to his hammock and forgets the blast."

This poem abounds with beauties, but they need not be pointed out: the intelligent reader cannot miss them. One more only shall be mentioned here—the affecting contrast between the felicity of the "veteran steed," and his unhappy master, in retirement; the latter incapable of tasting the joy which he bestowed on "the favoured brute," when he turned him into the park to graze, and range, and rest at will. Yet the worn-out hunter, and broken-down war-horse, are roused by the sound of the horn or the trumpet, and rush instinctively to the chase or the review. But they do not pine in secret for past pleasures.

There is another long rhyming poem of Cowper's, called TIROCINIUM; or, a Review of Schools. The subject was manifestly a favourite one with himself, but he has certainly failed to make it so with his readers—a case by no means uncommon among poets, as well as other fine artists. This is perhaps the driest and most elaborated of all his works. His horror of public schools arose chiefly from his own frightful experience in those through which he passed; but his miseries, both in boyhood and maturity, were personal and peculiar, and only incidentally

affected by the circumstances in which he was placed. The pernicious seeds had, most probably, been deposited in a morbid constitution from his birth. It is pure gratuitous assumption, that he would not have been melancholy if he had not been religious; and as for the baneful effects of being unequally yoked with tyrannical companions in a public seminary, there is no reason to believe that these were felt, in any comparable degree, by the bulk of his own hardier associates. The evil of such establishments, is more generally exhibited in a contrary way, by forcing the youthful mind to premature self-confidence. Yet England would be a strange country, and Englishmen more phlegmatic and unsocial than they are represented to be by our mercurial neighbours, if children were all educated at home. There is a certain knowledge of the world, which must be useful to every body who would fill his place in it; and if some part of this be learned too soon in public schools, the disadvantage of learning it too late, has been bitterly felt by many a noble, but discouraged spirit, through after life. *Tirocinium*, however, contains much admirable reasoning, some beautiful domestic pictures, and a few terrible inflictions of satire on such delinquents as stand in the Author's way.

OCCASIONAL VERSES are often the most indifferent compositions of great poets. Cowper had a peculiar talent for these; a playful fancy, as well as a certain recondite ingenuity of thought, unexpectedly working itself out into forms the most amusing and curious. With these he possessed a sovereign

command of words, though he did not always select them well, partly through wilful carelessness, and partly because his ear was indifferently refined, not from want of delicacy of sense, but from long neglect of culture, in that portion of life when, by other poets, the gratification of that nice organ is most studied. Many of his minor pieces, particularly the courtly ones, are the best of the species in the language. They have more grace and nature than Prior's, seldom offend against good taste, and never against good manners. Though he does not uniformly overcome the petty difficulties of these, there is always some sally of humour, some gay surprise, or subtle allusion, that redeems the least successful from the disgrace of failure. Among the serious ones, the *Verses, supposed to have been written by Alexander Selkirk*, those *On receiving his Mother's Picture*, and *My Mary*, are, by the common consent of all readers, the most permanently affecting. They might be repeated for ever without tiring; and the world never will be weary of repeating them. *John Gilpin*, on the other hand, for hearty exhilaration, is equally unrivalled. The *Report of a Case not to be found in any of the Books*, in gravity of ridicule is unexcelled. There is a sly reserve in the decision, of which many readers are not aware, the good sense of it being hidden in the studied absurdity of the terms:—

“ That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,  
By day-light or candle-light—Eyes should be shut !”

This judgment is according to a *law of nature*; the

eye closes at the near approach of any thing, and, in putting on spectacles, people instinctively *shut their eyes*. *The Poet's New Year's Gift to Mrs. Throckmorton*, includes one of the most delicate complimentary turns that ever poet paid, or woman received. *The Ode to Apollo, on an Ink-glass almost dried up in the Sun*, is insurpassably beautiful in conception, and is itself an answer to the prayer which it contains. *The Shrubbery* is the expression of those desponding sentiments which were the daily companions of his meditations when he was alone, but only when there was a tenderness in the feeling of grief, that softened the withering horror of its dark, dry, rigid character, in the fixed form of despair.—There is no barbarous wit in Cowper; not an inhuman joke in all his writings. His satire has a whip of scorpions, but it is only wielded against villany and false philosophy, when the castigation of wickedness is mercy to mankind. *The Epistle to Joseph Hill* is truly Horatian, in graceful humour, and easy narrative: both the stories are in point, and the application of the *broad-cloth* to his friend, completes the whole most happily and unexpectedly.—There are a few sarcastic lines *on Reading some Names of little note in the Biographia Britannica*. Far more fortunate, in being sent down with honour to posterity, are the friends of a great poet, who cannot emerge from obscurity, and shine through distant ages, without shedding light upon those who were near to him in private life. Joseph Hill, Mrs. Unwin, Lady Austen, John Cox, Parish Clerk of Northampton, with many others, were “names of

little note," which, in the course of nature, must have gone out, like the sparks in the simile; but being associated with the renown of Cowper, will be held in remembrance while his verse shall endure.

"THE TASK," however, is our Author's greatest work, and without it all the merit of all his other efforts might scarcely have availed to preserve his name from oblivion; not because the larger portion of those can be deemed inferior to this favourite and fortunate piece, but because it required all the fortune and favour of this to induce the world to grant a hearing to the rest. It is a poem of singular construction, consisting of excursions of thought, in which the successive topics are no more necessarily connected, than the successive objects of natural scenery, occurring on walks in various directions, which might be interchanged, altered, omitted, or others entirely different substituted. The chief art of the poet to make materials so diverse, and frequently so anomalous, harmoniously combine, is perceptible in the quiet and apparently natural transitions from one strain to another, by some obvious associations, in which the reader instantly acquiesces, and forgets what he has left behind, in looking at what is before him; or some sudden affinity, not at all anticipated, which pleasantly surprises when discovered, and reconciles him at once to the new theme. Any man accustomed to ruminare, and, at the same time, to note external objects by the way, whatever they are, mean or magnificent—men, animals, trees, sounds, motions, colours—need only ramble half-a-dozen miles, letting his ideas take their own course;

—then, at the close, if he will minutely retrace his cross-musings, and set them down on paper, he will find an argument for a new book of *The Task*, sufficiently rich and pregnant for a genius like Cowper's to work up with proportionate effect. In truth, nothing can be more natural than the plan of *The Task*, heterogeneous as it appears at first; for the mind feels no incongruity in discursive contemplation, whereas all concatenated reasoning or discourse is palpably artificial. The charm of this poem is the reality of every thing in it. The characters are living ones, the landscapes are local, the sentiments are those of conversation, and all that pleased, transported, awed, or saddened in the perusal, seems to have arisen out of actual circumstances on the spot, where to entranced imagination, the very time of day, the furniture of the rooms, the garden-walls, the river, bridge, park and lane scenery, are just as they were in certain parts of the shires of Buckingham and Bedford forty years ago. The reader is the poet's companion and confidant. *The Task* is not a dry didactic essay, a laboriously descriptive one, nor an intricate story, abounding with characters and incidents. Narrative, description, characters and ethics, indeed, are all introduced in turn; but each so unobtrusively, that it is only regarded because it stands in its place, as a tower, a mountain, wood, or stream, occurs in the progress of a country walk; or rather, as either the scenes or the sentiments might literally have occurred in personal interviews between the poet and the reader. The latter never loses sight of the former; and Cowper is so intelligent and



animated a companion, that none would ever willingly forget his presence. We therefore read as if we heard the language from his lips, and feel as if we were looking in the face of the speaker.

*The Sofa* was the burden of *the Task* set him "by a lady." Accordingly, in metre as artificial and ingeniously turned as real cabinet-work, the genealogy of that accomplished piece of furniture is traced, with much quaintness and effort, through little more than a hundred lines; when, having said all that *can* be said of a sofa in that space, the poet quits his *Task*, and, through six books, says all that he pleases of what can *not* be said of a sofa. Having lolled a few moments, after his labour, upon it, he starts up, exclaiming—

— "I have loved the rural walk through lanes  
Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep,  
And skirted thick with intertexture firm  
Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk  
O'er hills, through valleys, and by rivers' brink,  
E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds,  
T' enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames."

This is a sufficient invitation to the reader; and away they post, the Poet and he, nor ever return to the sofa, or pause till the end of the first book.

Cowper was personally unacquainted with the more magnificent forms of nature, in mountains, valleys, forests, and ocean; yet no poet ever more affectionately loved, or faithfully depicted her; and there is no perceptible deficiency of knowledge of her transcendently great and beautiful phenomena, though he knew nothing of these on a grander scale

than the prospect from Shooter's Hill, and spent the principal part of his time in the metropolis, and amidst tame but pleasing inland scenery. The first book of *The Task* is amusingly descriptive of the latter, enlivened with poetically picturesque groups, like that of the gipsies, or interesting solitary figures, like those of *Crazy Kate* and *Omai*; till the Author's genius, no more to be confined within the ring of the horizon, glances to the uttermost parts of the sea, and sings of "the isles so lately found." The passage in reference to these, is very remarkable at this time, when such a passage could *not* be written:

————— "E'en the favoured isles  
 So lately found, although the constant sun  
 Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,  
 Can boast but little virtue; and inert  
 Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain  
 In manners—victims of luxurious ease.  
 These therefore I can pity, placed remote  
 From all that science traces, art invents,  
 Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed  
 In boundless oceans, never to be passed  
 By navigators uninformed as they,  
 Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again."

————— "We found no bait  
 To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,  
 Disinterested good, is not our trade.  
 We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;  
 And must be bribed to compass Earth again  
 By other hopes and richer fruits than yours."

Could the philanthropic satirist rise from the dead, and hear what has been done in these very isles, within the last seven years only, in what a dif-

ferent strain would he allude to them and to his countrymen! With what joy would he blot from his pages the last quoted lines, and say,

————— “Doing good,  
Disinterested good, *is* NOW our trade,” &c.

The bounds of this article will not allow even an enumeration of the miscellaneous contents of the several books of this poem, which, in one respect, resembles the celebrated “Night Thoughts,”—that, being limited to no particular subject, or even range of subjects, the rhapsodist feels himself privileged to expatiate at his pleasure, on all that comes immediately or incidentally in his way. There are a few passages, which, in style and cast of sentiment, resemble those of that singular composition; but, on the whole, *The Task* is incomparably more attractive, and yet, in its religious influence, incomparably more impressive, in the best sense, than the sublime, but dark and comfortless “Complaint” of Young.

Book II.—The opening of this book, to the clause beginning with the well-known line,

“England, with all thy faults I love thee still,”

is above all common-place praise. It is the highest, the longest, the most triumphant flight of genius, kindled to intensest ardour, that may be found in any of the Author’s works. Then follows, to the end, a vein of the finest but bitterest satire on statesmen, philosophers, clergymen, pleasure-takers, and worldlings in general. The frequency and poignancy of the contempt with which Cowper alludes to philo-

sophy, (even natural and experimental,) both in *The Task*, and his other argumentative pieces, must sound in many ears illiberal, and would indeed be so, were not his sarcasms and invectives aimed solely at those who look for every thing in nature but God, and, whatever else they find in her, take special care not to find Him. One cause, probably, why he so often conjures up these pompous, self-sufficient oracles of infidelity, is, that about the period when he wrote, the works of the French encyclopedists were in their height of portentous reputation and pestilent influence. The life and adventures of *Discipline*, with the anarchy in public schools which has followed his demise, form a very lively allegorical sketch. The metaphor of the quiver and arrows in the context, is bold and original in application, though borrowed from a noble scriptural comparison—"As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth."

Book III.—The scenery here is the Garden, and the reveries that ensue are suitable to the place,—self-recollections, in which sudden evanescent pleasantries occasionally mingles with overpowering pathos:—

“ I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by one, who had himself  
 Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore,  
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
 With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
 He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.”

Who, glancing through the book before us, can

refrain from mentioning this inimitable, this inestimable passage, so pre-eminent for poetic beauty, tender melancholy, and the avowal of Christian experience? The sequel conveys interesting information concerning his personal situation at this time and for many years preceding:—

“ Since then, with few associates, in remote  
And silent woods I wander, far from those  
My former partners of the peopled scene,” &c.

Cowper belonged to a noble stock, whose other branches were all flourishing in the sunshine of the great world, while he thus lived in “distant shades,” among strangers, an adopted son, brother, friend, till this very poem cast such a glory about his retreat, that his exalted relatives were glad to find him out, and not only own him, but plead their kindred, that he might own them. Surely the long and keen philippic on philosophical pursuits that follows, is liable to much misconception, if applied to the pursuits of genuine philosophy, which, whatever may be said against it by the most eloquent and pious of men, is nothing more nor less than the quest of truth—the truth of God himself, wherever He has placed it within human search, in any of his works. The poet has hardly done enough to atone for his well-meant, but not well applied ridicule of knowledge thus acquired, in the lines—

————— “ Philosophy baptized  
In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees  
As meant to indicate a God to man,  
Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own,” &c.

—In other respects, “The Garden” is a terrestrial paradise, and our Poet might be Adam in innocence cultivating it. His occupations are charmingly described. His horror of hunting, and detestation of great cities, are not less characteristically expressed. On the latter subject we have a lamentation over “past times,” which, according to all poets, but especially all satirists, were far better than the present, and are praised beyond what they were, to make these appear worse than they are.

————— “Were England now,  
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,  
And undebauched.”

Let the reader proceed through twenty lines further, and then honestly ask—*when* were these times?—In no page of English history can they be discovered. We may indeed find several centuries after the Conquest, when great landholders habitually resided on their estates; but their houses were castles in those days, they themselves were feudal lords, and their tenants *serfs*—in plain English, *slaves*: or, in the middle age, after the wars of the barons were over, there might be more brute gormandizing and riotous hospitality, among the wealthy and their immediate dependents, than there is now in the elegant mansions of our nobility, which are only visited for a few short months in summer; but it is the perfect conviction of the writer of those strictures, that there never was a time when the peasantry, artizans, and manufacturers of this realm, were so orderly, comfortable, and intelligent, in their conduct, their

dwellings, and their minds, as they are seen at this day, not only in "the country," which "God made," but in the "town," which "man made."

In the three foregoing books, the reader might imagine himself making so many morning calls upon the Poet. On the first, taking a ramble with him through Sir John Throckmorton's park;—on the second, confined perhaps by rain to the house, and discoursing on subjects suggested by their conversation at the former interview;—on the third, finding the Poet at work in his garden, and there, amidst sunshine and a fresh breeze, listening, almost without interruption, while he, sometimes cheerfully, sometimes pensively, touched upon the circumstances of his past life, and recurred to his reminiscences of "the world," as it was when he was young and one of its inhabitants. The intimacy of the two parties having warmed, at every meeting, into the cordiality of friendship, the Poet may be supposed to have invited his new acquaintance to make a longer and more social visit. The latter arriving at tea-time, on a winter evening, is introduced to the family circle—Cowper, Mrs. Unwin, and Lady Austen—at the parsonage house in Olney. Such an evening, indeed, has seldom been spent, "in prose or rhyme," within the compass of a book; but thousands and tens of thousands of delighted readers have enjoyed it over again at their own fire-sides, and millions, in ages to come, will, each in turn, be the imaginary guests in this happy parlour. The visitor stays all night, the weather being too rough for him to venture home, through the pitiless storm that raves

without, but makes the comfort within more ineffably endeared. The Poet and he are up betimes in the morning to see the various labours of the night, exemplified in the snow-scenery of the landscape, and the ice-works at the mill-dam. These form the fable of the fifth book, and *The Winter's Walk at Noon* occupies the sixth.

Considered in this view, there is an unity of time, place, and persons, a harmony of subjects, and a progress of the story, in this portion, not so conspicuous through the former more desultory books of *The Task*. The present Essay, having already exceeded the compass originally prescribed to the writer, must be concluded with a few brief notices of the most striking passages in this half of the poem.

Book IV. abounds with enchanting representations of fire-side felicity, contrasted not only with the war of elements without, but with the turbulence of the world, in the dissipation of high life, the cares and anxieties in the middle station, and the positive sufferings of ill-housed, ill-clothed, and ill-fed poverty. The coming in of the post, the boy, his horn and his bags, with the picturesque incident of the bridge, combine to give reality to the scene. The waggoner almost foundered with his wain and horses in the snow-storm; the cold colouring, and heart-withering pathos of the poor family-piece; the dark deeds and shrewd daring of the village robber; the metamorphosis of the simple rural lass, by the pains of the wig-weaver and milliner, into a creature

---

“ of a rank  
Too proud for dairy-work, or sale of eggs;”



and the more grotesque transmutation of the clown into a soldier, till nobody knows him, and himself least of all; the fume, the din and drunkenness of the learned and politic company at the low alehouse, —are all painted in a style so exquisitely true, and humorously chaste, that without the slightest daub of caricature, they at once move tears of pity and of laughter, at the miseries and absurdities of mankind. The following transformation of time is in Cowper's own manner, and has all the force and quaintness which he loved to employ in his casual sketches:—

“ Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,  
 Unsoiled, and swift, and of a silken sound ;  
 But the world's Time is Time in masquerade !  
 Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged  
 With motley plumes ; and, where the peacock shows  
 His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red  
 With spots quadrangular of diamond form,  
 Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,  
 And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.  
 What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,  
 Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard-mace  
 Well does the work of his destructive scythe.”

Book V.—In the *Winter Morning Walk*, the Poet, after a series of minute copies from nature, of circumstances which no pencil could delineate with half the truth and fineness of his pen, is suddenly rapt into Russia, to behold the ice-palace of the great Catharine. The use is admirable which he makes of this allusion, to break away into digression, and introduce, as it were unpremeditatedly, his invectives against tyrannical princes, and sing the praises of liberty,—next to religion, always the most inspir-

ing theme to him. To contrive a natural link of connection between the objects of sight in winter-morning landscape, and the "game" of war, might seem impossible; but by the seasonable recollection of this gorgeous "wonder of the north," the transition is made with such triumphant art, that the subjects coalesce as perfectly as did the hewn blocks of ice, "with water interfused," of which the palace itself was built. The genuine and manly eulogium of a British king, "who loves the laws," very opportunely redeems the ardent and unsparing scourge of despots from the suspicion of disloyalty, even in thought, towards his own sovereign.—The famous passage on the Bastile has been quoted a thousand times, to show how he verified his own words in his own character, when, speaking of ancient times, he says,

————— "the sacred name  
Of *prophet* and of *poet* were the same."

Cowper certainly devined more successfully concerning the possible futurity, when apostrophizing the walls of that "abode of broken hearts," than when addressing the "isles so lately found" in the south seas, on which some remarks have already been made.—The close of the fifth book, from

"So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth  
Illuminates," &c.

is one of the most finished portions of the whole; exemplifying the devotional spirit of the Author, with an affluence of thought, a beauty and selectness of phrase, and a harmony of numbers, seldom dis-

played by his capricious muse through so considerable a length of lines.

The opening of Book VI. is of corresponding excellence, in a very different character. “The sympathy of souls with sounds,” to which attention is called by the village bells, must touch to the quick all who have souls, and have heard sounds that awakened their most secret emotions. After the meditation which follows, and which is so natural, that it seems rather the spontaneous reflection of our own mind, than poured into it through melodious verse, the reader is suddenly reminded of the Poet at his side, when the latter takes up his wonted parable, and describes the scenery of “*The Winter Walk at Noon*,” unexpectedly recurring to the original cause of the preceding rumination, in three lines, wherein the ideas of sound and sight, music and picture, are inimitably blended:—

“*Again* the harmony comes o’er the vale;  
And through the trees *I view the embattled tower*,  
Whence all the music.”

Who, at this pause, does not stand still, in imagination, to hearken to the bells, look out before him for the church, and perceive, through his inmost spirit,

“The soothing influence of the wafted strains?”

—The poet began this Book with the sympathy of souls with sounds; but the soul’s sympathies with living creatures furnish him with a loftier argument in the issue. The characters, habits, and sufferings,

of brutes, occupy much of the succeeding pages: the dumb creation never had a more eloquent advocate, nor one who could more heartily enter into their innocent enjoyments, assert their noble qualities, or feel an utter abhorrence of their wrongs. The story of *Misagathus*, however, is neither impressive, nor even satisfactory. If it be a fiction, it is a violent one; if a fact, it ought to have been authenticated. Having closed this division of his theme—a theme continually varying, but always, if the reader experiences a momentary regret when “the master” changes his hand, compensating him with a new exhibition of the same glorious and graceful mind,

“ Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,  
Then show far off their shining plumes again,”

—he comes, in the present case, full upon man, in all the austerity of a virtuous censor, indignant without spleen, and stern without malignity. Never was there a satirist of equal power with Cowper, so thoroughly a humane, gentle, unoffending personage, who would not wilfully inflict pain upon any living thing, yet who never spared vice or folly, under whatever disguise, lashed *them* with a vengeance as if they could feel, and a sincerity, as if chastisement might amend them.—The strain, “Man praises man,” thrice repeated, and differently illustrated, though liable to misrepresentation, perhaps indeed too extravagant, is in Cowper’s most felicitously sarcastic style. From man’s idolatry of man, he returns to man’s tyranny over brutes, and

“The groans of nature in this nether world.”

These carry him out in the spirit of prophecy, when his paraphrases of Isaiah's inspired representations of the future age of peace and innocence, will bear comparison with the best passages in Pope's *Messiah*. In one marvellous figure, at least, Cowper has transcended Pope. Splendid diction is never profusely employed by the former, because, from resolute severity of taste, (induced, perhaps, by early familiarity with the dry forms of special pleading,) he generally satisfied himself with proper words in proper places. In the instance before us, however, even Pope, ornate and elegant as his description is, must yield to Cowper:—

“ The smiling infant in his hand shall take  
The crested basilisk and speckled snake,  
Pleased the green lustre of their scales survey,  
And with their forky tongues shall innocently play.”

*Messiah.*

————— “ No foe to man  
Lurks in the serpent now: the mother sees,  
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,  
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.”

*The Task, Book vi.*

With the exception of one weak word, “ worm,”—for which our poet has the authority of Milton,—the wealth of the English language could not have more richly adorned the image; it is as full of life as the serpent himself, just slipped out of his slough, and revelling in spring sunshine. The introduction of “ the mother,” too, gives double beauty and interest to the group.

The address to the Redeemer, which follows these millennial anticipations, breathes the soul of one “exceedingly jealous for the Lord of Hosts.” The reflections on the state of him who only is “the happy man,” are amiably characteristic of him who is the genuinely good one. The poet seems unconsciously to delineate himself, as he might be, when the evil spirit, charmed away by the music of his own sweet harp, was *not* upon him.—The brief retrospect of the multifarious themes of *The Task* is truly graceful, and the “conclusion of the whole matter” all that it ought to be—the consecration of a glorious work to Him who gave the power to execute it. The passage having been already quoted in part, (see page vi.) a few humbler lines from the third Book, expressive of his objects in writing, may terminate this imperfect sketch of Cowper’s poetry:—

——— “I recommend, though at the risk  
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,  
The cause of piety, and sacred truth,  
And virtue, and those scenes, which God ordained  
Should best secure them and promote them most:  
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive  
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.”

J. M.

SHEFFIELD, *October*, 1824.

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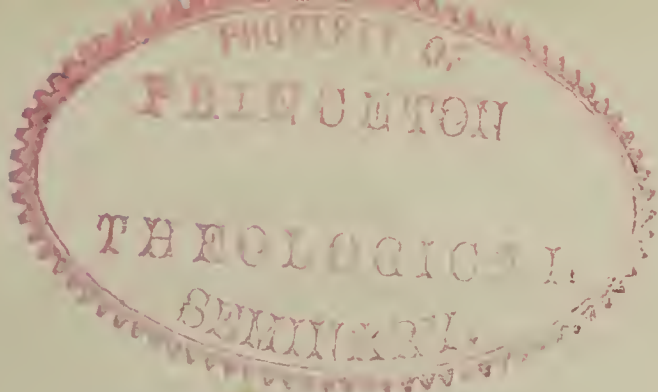
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**P O E M S.**





## TABLE TALK.

---

Si te forte meæ gravis uret sarcina chartæ,  
Abjicito. HOR. Lib. 1. Epist. 13.

---

*A.* You told me, I remember, glory, built  
On selfish principles, is shame and guilt;  
The deeds, that men admire as half-divine,  
Stark naught, because corrupt in their design.  
Strange doctrine this! that without scruple tears  
The laurel that the very lightning spares;  
Brings down the warrior's trophy to the dust,  
And eats into his bloody sword like rust.

*B.* I grant that, men continuing what they are,  
Fierce, avaricious, proud, there must be war;  
And never meant the rule should be applied  
To him that fights with justice on his side.

Let laurels, drenched in pure Parnassian dews,  
Reward his mem'ry, dear to every muse,  
Who, with a courage of unshaken root,  
In honour's field advancing his firm foot,  
Plants it upon the line that justice draws,  
And will prevail or perish in her cause.  
'Tis to the virtues of such men, man owes  
His portion in the good that Heaven bestows.  
And when recording History displays  
Feats of renown, though wrought in ancient days,

Tells of a few stout hearts, that fought and died,  
 Where duty placed them, at their country's side ;  
 The man, that is not moved with what he reads,  
 That takes not fire at their heroic deeds,  
 Unworthy of the blessings of the brave,  
 Is base in kind, and born to be a slave.

But let eternal infamy pursue  
 The wretch, to nought but his ambition true ;  
 Who, for the sake of filling with one blast  
 The post-horns of all Europe, lays her waste.  
 Think yourself stationed on a towering rock,  
 To see a people scattered like a flock,  
 Some royal mastiff panting at their heels,  
 With all the savage thirst a tiger feels ;  
 Then view him self-proclaimed in a gazette,  
 Chief monster that has plagued the nations yet.  
 The globe and sceptre in such hands misplaced,  
 Those ensigns of dominion how disgraced !  
 The glass, that bids man mark the fleeting hour,  
 And Death's own scythe would better speak his power ;  
 Then grace the bony phantom in their stead,  
 With the king's shoulder-knot and gay cockade ;  
 Clothe the twin brethren in each others dress,  
 The same their occupation and success.

*A.* 'Tis your belief the world was made for man ;  
 Kings do but reason on the self-same plan :  
 Maintaining yours, you cannot theirs condemn,  
 Who think, or seem to think, man made for them.

*B.* Seldom, alas ! the power of logic reigns  
 With much sufficiency in royal brains ;  
 Such reasoning falls like an inverted cone,  
 Wanting its proper base to stand upon.  
 Man made for kings ! those optics are but dim,  
 That tell you so—say, rather, they for him.

That were indeed a king-ennobling thought,  
 Could they, or would they reason as they ought.  
 The diadem, with mighty projects lined,  
 To catch renown by ruining mankind,  
 Is worth, with all its gold and glittering store,  
 Just what the toy will sell for, and no more.

Oh! bright occasions of dispensing good,  
 How seldom used, how little understood!  
 To pour in Virtue's lap her just reward!  
 Keep Vice restrained behind a double guard;  
 To quell the faction, that affronts the throne,  
 By silent magnanimity alone;  
 To nurse with tender care the thriving arts,  
 Watch every beam Philosophy imparts;  
 To give religion her unbridled scope,  
 Nor judge by statute a believer's hope;  
 With close fidelity and love unfeigned,  
 To keep the matrimonial bond unstained;  
 Covetous only of a virtuous praise;  
 His life a lesson to the land he sways;  
 To touch the sword with conscientious awe,  
 Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw;  
 To sheath it in the peace-restoring close,  
 With joy beyond what victory bestows;—  
 Blest country, where these kingly glories shine!  
 Blest England, if this happiness be thine!

*A.* Guard what you say; the patriotic tribe  
 Will sneer and charge you with a bribe.—*B.* A Bribe?  
 The worth of his three kingdoms I defy,  
 To lure me to the baseness of a lie:  
 And, of all lies (be that one poet's boast,)  
 The lie that flatters I abhor the most.  
 Those arts be theirs, who hate his gentle reign;  
 But he that loves him has no need to feign.

*A.* Your smooth eulogium to one crown addressed,  
Seems to imply a censure on the rest.

*B.* Quevedo, as he tells his sober tale,  
Asked, when in hell, to see the royal jail;  
Approved their method in all other things;  
But where, good sir, do you confine your kings?  
There—said his guide—the group is full in view.  
Indeed!—replied the don—there are but few.  
His black interpreter the charge disdained—  
Few, fellow?—there are all that ever reigned.  
Wit, undistinguishing, is apt to strike  
The guilty and not guilty both alike.

I grant the sarcasm is too severe,  
And we can readily refute it here;  
While Alfred's name, the father of his age,  
And the sixth Edward's grace th' historic page.

*A.* Kings then, at last, have but the lot of all;  
By their own conduct they must stand or fall.

*B.* True. While they live, the courtly laureat pays  
His quit-rent ode, his peppercorn of praise;  
And many a dunce, whose fingers itch to write,  
Adds, as he can, his tributary mite.

A subject's faults a subject may proclaim,  
A monarch's errors are forbidden game!  
Thus, free from censure; overawed by fear,  
And praised for virtues, that they scorn to wear,  
The fleeting forms of majesty engage  
Respect, while stalking o'er life narrow stage;  
Then leave their crimes for history to scan,  
And ask, with busy scorn, Was this the man?

I pity kings, whom Worship waits upon,  
Obsequious, from the cradle to the throne;  
Before whose infant eyes the flatterer bows,  
And binds a wreath about their baby brows;



Whom Education stiffens into state,  
 And death awakens from that dream too late.  
 Oh ! if servility with supple knees,  
 Whose trade it is to smile, to crouch, to please ;  
 If smooth Dissimulation, skilled to grace  
 A devil's purpose with an angel's face ;  
 If smiling peeresses, and simpering peers,  
 Encompassing his throne a few short years ;  
 If the gilt carriage and the pampered steed,  
 That wants no driving and disdains the lead ;  
 If guards, mechanically formed in ranks,  
 Playing, at beat of drum, their martial pranks,  
 Should'ring, and standing as if struck to stone,  
 While condescending majesty looks on !—  
 If monarchy consists in such base things,  
 Sighing, I say again, I pity kings !

To be suspected, thwarted, and withstood,  
 Even when he labours for his country's good ;  
 To see a band, called patriot for no cause,  
 But that they catch at popular applause,  
 Careless of all th' anxiety he feels,  
 Hook disappointment on the public wheels ;  
 With all their flippant fluency of tongue,  
 Most confident, when palpably most wrong ;—  
 If this be kingly, then farewell for me  
 All kingship : and may I be poor and free !

To be the Table Talk of clubs up-stairs,  
 To which th' unwashed artificer repairs,  
 T' indulge his genius after long fatigue,  
 By diving into cabinet intrigue ;  
 (For what kings deem a toil, as well they may,  
 To him is relaxation and mere play ;)   
 To win no praise when well-wrought plans prevail,  
 But to be rudely censured when they fail ;

To doubt the love his fav'rites may pretend,  
 And in reality to find no friend ;  
 If he indulge a cultivated taste,  
 His galleries with the works of art well graced,  
 To hear it called extravagance and waste ;  
 If these attendants, and if such as these,  
 Must follow royalty, then welcome ease ;  
 However humble and confined the sphere,  
 Happy the state that has not these to fear.

*A.* Thus men, whose thoughts contemplative have  
 dwelt

On situations that they never felt,  
 Start up sagacious, covered with the dust  
 Of dreaming study and pedantic rust,  
 And prate and preach about what others prove,  
 As if the world and they were hand and glove.  
 Leave kingly backs to cope with kingly cares ;  
 They have their weight to carry, subjects theirs ;  
 Poets' of all men, ever least regret  
 Increasing taxes and the nation's debt.  
 Could you contrive the payment, and rehearse  
 The mighty plan, oracular, in verse,  
 No bard, howe'er majestic, old or new,  
 Should claim my fixed attention more than you.

*B.* Not Brindley nor Bridgewater would essay  
 To turn the course of Helicon that way ;  
 Nor would the Nine consent the sacred tide  
 Should purl amidst the traffic of Cheapside,  
 Or tinkle in 'Change Alley, to amuse  
 The leathern ears of stockjobbers and Jews.

*A.* Vouchsafe, at least, to pitch the key of rhyme  
 To themes more pertinent, if less sublime.  
 When ministers and ministerial arts ;  
 Patriots, who love good places at their hearts ;

When admirals, extolled for standing still,  
 Or doing nothing with a deal of skill ;  
 Generals, who will not conquer when they may,  
 Firm friends to peace, to pleasure, and good pay ;  
 When Freedom, wounded almost to despair,  
 Though Discontent alone can find out where ;  
 When themes like these employ the poet's tongue,  
 I hear as mute as if a syren sung.

Or tell me, if you can, what power maintains

A Briton's scorn of arbitrary chains :

That were a theme might animate the dead,

And move the lips of poets cast in lead.

*B.* The cause, tho' worth the search, may yet elude  
 Conjecture and remark, however shrewd.

They take, perhaps, a well-directed aim,

Who seek it in his climate and his frame.

Liberal in all things else, yet nature here

With stern severity deals out the year.

Winter invades the spring, and often pours

A chilling flood on summer's drooping flowers ;

Unwelcome vapours quench autumnal beams,

Ungential blasts attending curl the streams :

The peasants urge their harvest, ply the fork

With double toil, and shiver at their work—

Thus with a rigour, for his good designed,

She rears her fav'rite man of all mankind.

His form robust and of elastic tone,

Proportioned well, half muscle and half bone,

Supplies with warm activity and force

A mind well-lodged, and masculine of course.

Hence, Liberty, sweet Liberty inspires,

And keeps alive his fierce but noble fires.

Patient of constitutional control,

He bears it with meek manliness of soul :

But, if Authority grow wanton, woe  
 To him that treads upon his free-born toe ;  
 One step beyond the boundary of the laws  
 Fires him at once in Freedom's glorious cause.  
 Thus proud Prerogative, not much revered,  
 Is seldom felt, though sometimes seen and heard ;  
 And in his cage, like parrot fine and gay,  
 Is kept to strut, look big, and talk away.

Born in a climate softer far than ours,  
 Not formed, like us, with such Herculean powers,  
 The Frenchman, easy, debonair, and brisk,  
 Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,  
 Is always happy, reign whoever may,  
 And laughs the sense of misery far away.  
 He drinks his simple beverage with a gust ;  
 And, feasting on an onion and a crust,  
 We never feel th' alacrity and joy,  
 With which he shouts and carols *Vive le Roi!*  
 Filled with as much true merriment and glee,  
 As if he heard his king say—Slave, be free.

Thus happiness depends, as Nature shows,  
 Less on exterior things than most suppose,  
 Vigilant over all that he has made,  
 Kind Providence attends with gracious aid ;  
 Bids equity throughout his works prevail,  
 And weighs the nations in an even scale ;  
 He can encourage Slavery to a smile,  
 And fill with discontent a British isle.

*A.* Freeman and slave then, if the case be such,  
 Stand on level ; and you prove too much :  
 If all men indiscriminately share  
 His fostering power and tutelary care,  
 As well be yoked by Despotism's hand,  
 As dwell at large in Britain's chartered land.

B. No. Freedom has a thousand charms to show,  
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know.  
The mind attains, beneath her happy reign,  
The growth, that Nature meant she should attain;  
The varied fields of science, ever new,  
Opening and wider opening on her view,  
She ventures onward with a prosperous force,  
While no base fear impedes her in her course.  
Religion, richest favour of the skies,  
Stands most revealed before the freeman's eyes;  
No shades of superstition blot the day,  
Liberty chases all that gloom away;  
The soul emancipated, unoppressed,  
Free to prove all things, and hold fast the best,  
Learns much; and to a thousand listening minds  
Communicates with joy the good she finds;  
Courage in arms, and ever prompt to show  
His manly forehead to the fiercest foe;  
Glorious in war, but for the sake of peace,  
His spirits rising as his toils increase,  
Guards well what arts and industry have won,  
And Freedom claims him for her first-born son.  
Slaves fight for what were better cast away—  
The chain that binds them, and a tyrant's sway;  
But they, that fight for freedom, undertake  
The noblest cause mankind can have at stake:—  
Religion, virtue, truth, whate'er we call  
A blessing—freedom is the pledge of all.  
O Liberty! the prisoner's pleasing dream,  
The poet's muse, his passion, and his theme;  
Genius is thine, and thou art Fancy's nurse;  
Lost without thee th' ennobling powers of verse;  
Heroic song from thy free touch acquires  
Its clearest tone, the rapture it inspires:

Place me where Winter breathes his keenest air,  
 And I will sing, if Liberty be there ;  
 And I will sing at Liberty's dear feet,  
 In Afric's torrid clime, or India's fiercest heat.

*A.* Sing where you please ; in such a cause I grant  
 An English poet's privilege to rant ;  
 But is not Freedom—at least is not ours  
 Too apt to play the wanton with her powers,  
 Grow freakish, and, o'erleaping every mound,  
 Spread anarchy and terror all around ?

*B.* Agreed. But would you sell or slay your horse  
 For bounding and curvetting in his course ?  
 Or if, when ridden with a careless rein,  
 He break away, and seek the distant plain ?  
 No. His high mettle under good control,  
 Gives him Olympic speed, and shoots him to the goal.

Let discipline employ her wholesome arts ;  
 Let magistrates alert perform their parts ;  
 Not skulk or put on a prudential mask,  
 As if their duty were a desperate task ;  
 Let active Laws apply the needful curb,  
 To guard the Peace, that Riot would disturb ;  
 And Liberty, preserved from wild excess,  
 Shall raise no feuds for armies to suppress.  
 When Tumult lately burst his prison-door,  
 And set Plebeian thousands in a roar ;  
 Then he usurped Authority's just place,  
 And dared to look his master in the face ;  
 When the rude rabble's watchword was—Destroy,  
 And blazing London seemed a second Troy ;  
 Liberty blushed, and hung her drooping head,  
 Beheld their progress with the deepest dread ;  
 Blushed, that effects like these she should produce,  
 Worse than the deeds of galley-slaves broke loose.

She loses in such storms her very name,  
And fierce licentiousness should bear the blame.

Incomparable gem ! thy worth untold ;  
Cheap, tho' blood-bought, and thrown away when sold ;  
May no foes ravish thee, and no false friend  
Betray thee, while professing to defend !  
Prize it, ye ministers ; ye monarchs, spare ;  
Ye patriots, guard it with a miser's care.

*A.* Patriots, alas ! the few that have been found,  
Where most they flourish, upon English ground,  
The country's need have scantily supplied,  
And the last left the scene, when Chatham died.

*B.* Not so—the virtue still adorns our age,  
Though the chief actor died upon the stage.  
In him Demosthenes was heard again ;  
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain ;  
She clothed him with authority and awe,  
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.  
His speech, his form, his action, full of grace,  
And all his country beaming in his face,  
He stood, as some inimitable hand  
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.  
No sycophant or slave, that dared oppose  
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose ;  
And every venal stickler for the yoke  
Felt himself crushed at the first word he spoke.

Such men are raised to station and command,  
When Providence means mercy to a land.  
He speaks, and they appear ; to him they owe  
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow ;  
To manage with address, to seize with power  
The crisis of a dark decisive hour :  
So Gideon earned a victory not his own ;  
Subserviency his praise, and that alone.

Poor England! thou art a devoted deer,  
Beset with every ill but that of fear.  
Thee nations hunt; all mark thee for a prey;  
They swarm around thee, and thou stand'st at bay.  
Undaunted still, though wearied and perplexed;  
Once Chatham saved thee; but who saves thee next?  
Alas! the tide of pleasure sweeps along  
All, that should be the boast of British song.  
'Tis not the wreath, that once adorned thy brow,  
The prize of happier times, will serve thee now.  
Our ancestry, a gallant, Christian race,  
Patterns of every virtue, every grace,  
Confessed a God: they kneeled before they fought,  
And praised him in the victories he wrought.  
Now from the dust of ancient days bring forth  
Their sober zeal, integrity, and worth;  
Courage, ungraced by these, affronts the skies,  
Is but the fire without the sacrifice.  
The stream, that feeds the well-spring of the heart,  
Not more invigorates life's noblest part,  
Than Virtue quickens, with a warmth divine,  
The powers, that Sin has brought to a decline.

*A.* Th' inestimable Estimate of Brown  
Rose like a paper-kite, and charmed the town;  
But measures, planned and executed well,  
Shifted the wind that raised it, and it fell.  
He trod the very self-same ground you tread,  
And Victory refuted all he said.

*B.* And yet his judgment was not framed amiss;  
Its error, if it erred, was merely this—  
He thought the dying hour already come,  
And a complete recovery struck him dumb.

But that effeminacy, folly, lust,  
Enervate and enfeeble, and needs must;



And that a nation shamefully debased,  
 Will be despised and trampled on at last,  
 Unless sweet Penitence her powers renew,  
 Is truth, if history itself be true.  
 There is a time, and Justice marks the date,  
 For long-forbearing clemency to wait;  
 That hour elapsed, th' incurable revolt  
 Is punished, and down comes the thunderbolt.  
 If Mercy *then* put by the threatening blow,  
 Must she perform the same kind office *now*?  
 May she! and, if offended Heaven be still  
 Accessible, and prayer prevail, she will.

'Tis not, however, insolence and noise,  
 The tempest of tumultuary joys,  
 Nor is it yet despondence and dismay  
 Will win her visits or engage her stay;  
 Prayer only, and the penitential tear,  
 Can call her smiling down, and fix her here.

But when a country (one that I could name)  
 In prostitution sinks the sense of shame;  
 When infamous Venality grown bold,  
 Writes on his bosom, *To be let or sold*;  
 When Perjury, that heaven-defying vice,  
 Sells oaths by tale, and at the lowest price,  
 Stamps God's own name upon a lie just made,  
 To turn a penny in the way of trade;  
 When Avarice starves (and never hides his face)  
 Two or three millions of the human race,  
 And not a tongue inquires, how, where, or when,  
 Though conscience will have twinges now and then;  
 When profanation of the sacred cause  
 In all its parts, times, ministry, and laws,  
 Bespeaks a land, once Christian, fallen and lost,  
 In all, that wars against that title most;

What follows next, let cities of great name,  
 And regions long since desolate, proclaim.  
 Nineveh, Babylon, and ancient Rome,  
 Speak to the present times, and times to come ;  
 They cry aloud, in every careless ear,  
 Stop, while ye may ; suspend your mad career ;  
 O learn from our example and our fate,  
 Learn wisdom and repentance, ere too late.

Not only vice disposes and prepares  
 The Mind that slumbers sweetly in her snares,  
 To stoop to Tyranny's usurped command,  
 And bend her polished neck beneath his hand,  
 (A dire effect, by one of Nature's laws  
 Unchangeably connected with its cause ;)  
 But Providence himself will intervene,  
 To throw his dark displeasure o'er the scene.  
 All are his instruments ; each form of war,  
 What burns at home, or threatens from afar,  
 Nature in arms, her elements at strife,  
 The storms that overset the joys of life,  
 Are but his rods to scourge a guilty land,  
 And waste it at the bidding of his hand.  
 He gives the word, and Mutiny soon roars  
 In all her gates, and shakes her distant shores ;  
 The standards of all nations are unfurled ;  
 She has one foe, and that one foe the world :  
 And, if he doom that people with a frown,  
 And mark them with a seal of wrath pressed down,  
 Obduracy takes place ; callous and tough,  
 The reprobated race grows judgment-proof :  
 Earth shakes beneath, and Heaven roars above ;  
 But nothing scares them from the course they love.  
 To the lascivious pipe and wanton song,  
 That charm down fear, they frolic it along,

With mad rapidity and unconcern,  
 Down to the gulf from which is no return.  
 They trust in navies, and their navies fail—  
 God's curse can cast away ten thousand sail !  
 They trust in armies, and their courage dies ;  
 In wisdom, wealth, in fortune, and in lies ;  
 But all they trust in withers, as it must,  
 When He commands in whom they place no trust.  
 Vengeance at last pours down upon their coast  
 A long despised, but now victorious, host ;  
 Tyranny sends the chain, that must abridge  
 The noble sweep of all their privilege ;  
 Gives liberty the last, the mortal shock ;  
 Slips the slave's collar on, and snaps the lock.

*A.* Such lofty strains embellish what you teach ;  
 Mean you to prophesy, or but to preach ?

*B.* I know the mind, that feels indeed the fire  
 The muse imparts, and can command the lyre,  
 Acts with a force, and kindles with a zeal,  
 Whate'er the theme, that others never feel.  
 If human woes her soft attention claim,  
 A tender sympathy pervades the frame ;  
 She pours a sensibility divine  
 Along the nerve of every feeling line.  
 But if a deed, not tamely to be borne,  
 Fire indignation and a sense of scorn,  
 The strings are swept with such a power, so loud,  
 The storm of music shakes th' astonished crowd.  
 So, when remote futurity is brought  
 Before the keen inquiry of her thought,  
 A terrible sagacity informs  
 The poet's heart ; he looks to distant storms ;  
 He hears the thunder ere the tempest lowers ;  
 And, armed with strength surpassing human powers,

Seizes events as yet unknown to man,  
 And darts his soul into the dawning plan.  
 Hence, in a Roman mouth, the graceful name  
 Of prophet and of poet was the same ;  
 Hence British poets too the priesthood shared,  
 And every hallowed druid was a bard.  
 But no prophetic fires to me belong ;  
 I play with syllables, and sport in song.

*A.* At Westminster, where little poets strive  
 To set a distich upon six and five,  
 Where Discipline helps the opening buds of sense,  
 And makes the pupils proud with silver pence,  
 I was a poet too ; but modern taste  
 Is so refined, and delicate, and chaste,  
 That verse, whatever fire the fancy warms,  
 Without a creamy smoothness has no charms.  
 Thus, all success depending on an ear,  
 And thinking I might purchase it too dear,  
 If sentiment were sacrificed to sound,  
 And truth cut short to make a period round,  
 I judged a man of sense could scarce do worse,  
 Than caper in the morris-dance of verse.

*B.* Thus reputation is a spur to wit,  
 And some wits flag through fear of losing it.  
 Give me the line, that ploughs its stately course  
 Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force ;  
 That, like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,  
 Quite unindebted to the tricks of art.  
 When Labour and when Dulness, club in hand,  
 Like the two figures at St. Dunstan's, stand,  
 Beating alternately, in measured time,  
 The clock-work tintinabulum of rhyme,  
 Exact and regular the sounds will be ;  
 But such mere quarter-strokes are not for me.

From him who rears a poem lank and long,  
 To him who strains his all into a song ;  
 Perhaps some bonny Caledonian air,  
 All birks and braes, though he was never there ;  
 Or, having whelp'd a prologue with great pains,  
 Feels himself spent, and fumbles for his brains ;  
 A prologue interdashed with many a stroke—  
 An art contrived to advertise a joke,  
 So that the jest is clearly to be seen,  
 Not in the words—but in the gap between :  
 Manner is all in all, whate'er is writ,  
 The substitute for genius, sense, and wit.

To dally much with subjects mean and low,  
 Proves that the mind is weak, or makes it so.  
 Neglected talents rust into decay,  
 And every effort ends in push-pin play.  
 The man that means success, should soar above  
 A soldier's feather, or a lady's glove ;  
 Else, summoning the muse to such a theme,  
 The fruit of all her labour is whipp'd cream.  
 As if an eagle flew aloft, and then  
 Stoop'd from its highest pitch to pounce a wren.  
 As if the poet, purposing to wed,  
 Should carve himself a wife in gingerbread.

Ages elapsed ere Homer's lamp appeared,  
 And ages ere the Mantuan swain was heard.  
 To carry nature lengths unknown before,  
 To give a Milton birth, asked ages more.  
 Thus Genius rose and set at ordered times,  
 And shot a day-spring into distant climes,  
 Ennobling every region that he chose ;  
 He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose ;  
 And, tedious years of Gothic darkness passed,  
 Emerged, all splendour, in our isle at last.

Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,  
Then shew far off their shining plumes again.

*A.* Is genius only found in epic lays?—  
Prove this, and forfeit all pretence to praise.  
Make their heroic powers your own at once,  
Or candidly confess yourself a dunce.

*B.* These were the chief; each interval of night  
Was graced with many an undulating light.  
In less illustrious bards his beauty shone  
A meteor, or a star; in these, the sun,

The nightingale may claim the topmost bough,  
While the poor grasshopper must chirp below.  
Like him unnoticed, I, and such as I,  
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly:  
Perched on the meagre produce of the land,  
An ell or two of prospect we command;  
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,  
Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.

In Eden, ere yet innocence of heart  
Had faded, poetry was not an art.  
Language, above all teaching, or, if taught,  
Only by gratitude and glowing thought,  
Elegant as simplicity, and warm  
As ecstasy, unmanacled by form;  
Not prompted, as in our degen'rate days,  
By low ambition and the thirst of praise;  
Was natural as is the flowing stream,  
And yet magnificent—A God the theme!  
That theme on earth exhausted, though above  
'Tis found as everlasting as his love.  
Man lavished all his thoughts on human things—  
The feats of heroes, and the wrath of kings;  
But still, while virtue kindled his delight,  
The song was moral, and so far was right.

'Twas thus, till Luxury seduced the mind  
To joys less innocent, as less refined :  
Then Genius danced a bacchanal ; he crowned  
The brimming goblet, seized the thyrsus, bound  
His brows with ivy, rushed into the field  
Of wild imagination, and there reeled,  
The victim of his own lascivious fires,  
And, dizzy with delight, profaned the sacred wires.  
Anacreon, Horace, played in Greece and Rome  
This bedlam part ; and others nearer home.  
When Cromwell fought for power, and while he reign'd  
The proud protector of the power he gained,  
Religion, harsh, intolerant, austere,  
Parent of manners like herself severe,  
Drew a rough copy of the Christian face,  
Without the smile, the sweetness, or the grace ;  
The dark and sullen humour of the time  
Judged every effort of the muse a crime ;  
Verse, in the finest mould of fancy cast,  
Was lumber in an age so void of taste :  
But when the Second Charles assumed the sway,  
And arts revived beneath a softer day,  
Then, like a bow long forced into a curve,  
The mind, released from too constrained a nerve,  
Flew to its first position with a spring,  
That made the vaulted roofs of pleasure ring.  
His court, the dissolute and hateful school  
Of Wantonness, where vice was taught by rule,  
Swarmed with a scribbling herd, as deep inlaid  
With brutal lust as ever Circe made.  
From these a long succession, in the rage  
Of rank obscenity, debauched their age ;  
Nor ceased, till, ever anxious to redress  
The abuses of her sacred charge, the press,

The Muse instructed a well-nurtured train  
 Of abler votaries to cleanse the stain,  
 And claim the palm for purity of song,  
 That Lewdness had usurped and worn so long.  
 Then decent Pleasantry and sterling Sense,  
 That neither gave nor would endure offence,  
 Whipped out of sight, with Satire just and keen,  
 The puppy pack, that had defiled the scene.

In front of these came Addison. In him  
 Humour in holiday and slightly trim,  
 Sublimity and Attic taste, combined,  
 To polish, furnish, and delight the mind.  
 Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,  
 In verse well disciplined, complete, compact,  
 Gave virtue and morality a grace,  
 That, quite eclipsing Pleasure's painted face,  
 Levied a tax of wonder and applause,  
 E'en on the fools that trampled on their laws.  
 But he (his musical finesse was such,  
 So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)  
 Made poetry a mere mechanic art ;  
 And ev'ry warbler has his tune by heart.  
 Nature imparting her satiric gift,  
 Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and Swift,  
 With droll sobriety they raised a smile  
 At Folly's cost, themselves unmoved the while.  
 That constellation set, the world in vain  
 Must hope to look upon their like again.

*A.* Are we then left?—*B.* Not wholly in the dark :  
 Wit now and then, struck smartly, shows a spark  
 Sufficient to redeem the modern race  
 From total night and absolute disgrace.  
 While servile trick and imitative knack  
 Confine the million in the beaten track,



Perhaps some courser, who disdains the road,  
Snuffs up the wind, and flings himself abroad,  
Cotemporaries all surpassed, see one ;  
Short his career indeed, but ably run ,  
Churchill, himself unconscious of his powers,  
In penury consumed his idle hours ;  
And, like a scattered seed at random sown,  
Was left to spring by vigour of his own.  
Lifted at length, by dignity of thought  
And dint of genius to an affluent lot,  
He laid his head in Luxury's soft lap,  
And took, too often, there his easy nap.  
If brighter beams than all he threw not forth,  
'Twas negligence in him, not want of worth.  
Surly, and slovenly, and bold, and coarse,  
Too proud for art, and trusting in mere force,  
Spendthrift alike of money and of wit,  
Always at speed, and never drawing bit,  
He struck the lyre in such a careless mood,  
And so disdained the rules he understood,  
The laurel seemed to wait on his command,  
He snatched it rudely from the Muses' hand.  
Nature, exerting an unwearied power,  
Forms, opens, and gives scent to ev'ry flower ;  
Spreads the fresh verdure of the field, and leads  
The dancing Naiads through the dewy meads :  
She fills profuse ten thousand little throats  
With music, modulating all their notes ;  
And charms the woodland scenes and wilds unknown,  
With artless airs and concerts of her own :  
But seldom (as if fearful of expense)  
Vouchsafes to man a poet's just pretence—  
Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,  
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely sought ;

Fancy, that from the bow that spans the sky,  
Brings colours, dipped in Heaven, that never die ;  
A soul exalted above earth, a mind  
Skilled in the characters that form mankind ;  
And, as the sun in rising beauty dressed,  
Looks to the westward from the dappled east ;  
And marks, whatever clouds may interpose,  
Ere yet his race begins, its glorious close ;  
An eye like his to catch the distant goal ;  
Or, ere the wheels of verse begin to roll,  
Like his to shed illuminating rays  
On every scene and subject it surveys .  
Thus graced, the man asserts a poet's name,  
And the world cheerfully admits the claim.  
Pity Religion has so seldom found  
A skilful guide into poetic ground !  
The flowers would spring where'er she deign'd to stray,  
And every muse attend her in her way.  
Virtue indeed meets many a rhyming friend,  
And many a compliment politely penned ;  
But, unattired in that becoming vest  
Religion weaves for her, and half undressed,  
Stands in the desert, shiv'ring and forlorn,  
A wintry figure, like a wither'd thorn.  
The shelves are full, all other themes are sped ;  
Hackneyed and worn to the last flimsy thread,  
Satire has long since done his best ; and curst  
And loathsome Ribaldry has done his worst ;  
Fancy has sported all her powers away  
In tales, in trifles, and in children's play ;  
And 'tis the sad complaint, and almost true,  
Whate'er we write, we bring forth nothing new.  
'Twere new indeed to see a bard all fire,  
'Touched with a coal from heaven, assume the lyre,

And tell the world, still kindling as he sung;  
 With more than mortal music on his tongue,  
 That He, who died below, and reigns above,  
 Inspires the song, and that his name is Love.

For, after all, if merely to beguile,  
 By flowing numbers and a flow'ry style,  
 The tædium that the lazy rich endure,  
 Which now and then sweet poetry may cure ;  
 Of, if to see the name of idle self,  
 Stamped on the well-bound quarto, grace the shelf,  
 To float a bubble on the breath of Fame,  
 Prompt his endeavour and engage his aim,  
 Debased to servile purposes of pride,  
 How are the powers of genius misapplied !  
 The gift, whose office is the Giver's praise,  
 To trace him in his word, his works, his ways !  
 Then spread the rich discov'ry, and invite  
 Mankind to share in the divine delight ;  
 Distorted from its use and just design,  
 To make the pitiful possessor shine,  
 To purchase, at the fool-frequented fair  
 Of vanity, a wreath for self to wear,  
 Is profanation of the basest kind—  
 Proof of a trifling and a worthless mind.

*A.* Hail! Sternhold, then; and Hopkins hail!—

*B.* Amen.

If flattery, folly, lust, employ the pen ;  
 If acrimony, slander and abuse,  
 Give it a charge to blacken and traduce ;  
 Though Butler's wit, Pope's numbers, Prior's ease,  
 With all that fancy can invent to please,  
 Adorn the polished periods as they fall,  
 One madrigal of theirs is worth them all.

*A.* 'Twould thin the ranks of the poetic tribe,  
To dash the pen through all that you proscribe.

*B.* No matter—we could shift when they were not;  
And should, no doubt, if they were all forgot.

\*

**THE**

**PROGRESS OF ERROR.**

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Si quid loquar audiendum. HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

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SING, muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long  
May find a muse to grace it with a song)  
By what unseen and unsuspected arts  
The serpent Error twines round human hearts ;  
Tell where she lurks, beneath what flow'ry shades,  
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,  
The pois'nous, black, insinuating worm  
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.  
Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,  
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine !  
Truths, that the theorist could never reach,  
And observation taught me, I would teach.

Not all, whose eloquence the fancy fills,  
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,  
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,  
Can trace her mazy windings to their end ;  
Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,  
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure.  
The clear harangue, and cold as it is clear,  
Falls soporific on the listless ear ;  
Like quicksilver, the rhet'ric they display  
Shines as it runs, but grasp'd at, slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,  
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,  
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,  
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse ;

Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,  
 Say to what bar amenable were man?  
 With nought in charge, he could betray no trust;  
 And, if he fell, would fall because he must:  
 If Love reward him, or if Vengeance strike,  
 His recompense in both unjust alike.

Divine authority within his breast  
 Brings every thought, word, action to the test;  
 Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,  
 As Reason, or as Passion, takes the reins.

Heaven from above, and Conscience from within,  
 Cries in his startled ear—"Abstain from sin!"

The world around solicits his desire,  
 And kindles in his soul a treach'rous fire;  
 While, all his purposes and steps to guard,  
 Peace follows Virtue as its sure reward;  
 And Pleasure brings us surely in her train  
 Remorse, and Sorrow, and Vindictive Pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,  
 Must be supplied with objects of his choice;  
 Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,  
 Or present, or in prospect, meet his sight:  
 Those open on the spot their honey'd store;  
 These call him loudly to pursuit of more.  
 His unexhausted mine the sordid vice  
 Avarice shows, and virtue is the price.  
 Her various motives his ambition raise—  
 Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise  
 There Beauty woos him with expanded arms;  
 E'en Bacchanalian madness has its charms.

Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined  
 Might well alarm the most unguarded mind  
 Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth,  
 Or lead him devious from the path of truth:

Hourly allurements on his passions press,  
Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess.

Hark ! how its floats upon the dewy air !  
O what a dying, dying close was there !  
'Tis harmony from yon sequestered bow'r,  
Sweet harmony that soothes the midnight hour !  
Long ere the charioteer of day had run  
His morning course, th' enchantment was begun ;  
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,  
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent,  
That Virtue points to ? Can a life thus spent  
Lead to the bliss she promises the wise,  
Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the  
skies ?

Ye devotees to your adored employ,  
Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy,  
Love makes the music of the blest above,  
Heaven's harmony is universal love ;  
And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined,  
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,  
Leave Vice and Folly unsubdued behind.

Gray dawn appears : the sportsman and his train  
Speckle the bosom of the distant plain :  
'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs ;  
Save that his scent is less acute <sup>in</sup> that theirs,  
For persevering chase, and headlong leaps,  
True beagle as the staunchest hound he keeps.  
Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene,  
He takes offence, and wonders what you mean—  
The joy the danger and the toil o'erpays—  
'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.  
Again impetuous to the field he flies ;  
Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies :

Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home,  
Unmissed but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye Clergy, while your orbit is your place,  
Lights of the world, and stars of human race;  
But if eccentric ye forsake your sphere,  
Prodigies ominous, and view'd with fear:  
The comet's baneful influence is a dream;  
Yours, real and pernicious in the extreme.  
What then!—are appetites and lusts laid down  
With the same ease that man puts on his gown?  
Will Avarice and Concupiscence give place,  
Charmed by the sounds—Your Rev'rence, or Your  
Grace?

No. But his own engagement binds him fast;  
Or, if it does not, brands him to the last,  
What atheists call him—a designing knave,  
A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.  
Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,  
A cassocked huntsman, and a fiddling priest!  
He from Italian songsters takes his cue:  
Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.  
He takes the field, the master of the pack  
Cries—Well done saint! and claps him on the back.  
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this  
To stand a waymark in the road to bliss?  
Himself a wand'rer from the narrow way,  
His silly sheep what wonder if they stray?  
Go, cast your orders at your Bishop's feet,  
Send your dishonoured gown to Monmouth-street!  
The sacred function in your hands is made—  
Sad sacrilege! no function, but a trade!

Occiduus is a pastor of renown,  
When he has prayed and preached the Sabbath  
down,



With wire and catgut he concludes the day,  
 Quav'ring and semiquav'ring care away.  
 The full concerto swells upon your ear ;  
 All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear  
 The Babylonian tyrant, with a nod,  
 Had summoned them to serve his golden god ;  
 So well that thought th' employment seems to suit,  
 Psalt'ry, and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.  
 O fie ! 'tis evangelical and pure :  
 Observe each face, how sober and demure !  
 Ecstasy sets her stamp on ev'ry mien ;  
 Chins fall'n, and not an eye-ball to be seen.  
 Still I insist, though music heretofore  
 Has charm'd me much (not e'en Occiduus more,)  
 Love, joy, and peace, make harmony more meet  
 For Sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.

Will not the sickliest sheep of ev'ry flock  
 Resort to this example as a rock ;  
 There stand, and justify the foul abuse  
 Of Sabbath hours with plausible excuse ?  
 If apostolic gravity be free  
 To play the fool on Sundays, why not we ?  
 If he the tinkling harpsicord regards  
 As inoffensive, what offence in cards ?  
 Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay,  
 Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

O Italy !—thy Sabbaths will be soon  
 Our Sabbaths, closed with mumm'ry and buffoon.  
 Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,  
 Ours parcell'd out, as thine have ever been,  
 God's worship and the mountebank between.  
 What says the prophet ?—Let that day be blest  
 With holiness and consecrated rest.

Pastime and business both it should exclude,  
 And bar the door the moment they intrude ;  
 Nobly distinguished above all the six  
 By deeds, in which the world must never mix.  
 Hear him again ! He calls it a delight,  
 A day of luxury observed aright,  
 When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest,  
 Sits banquetting—and God provides the feast.  
 But triflers are engaged and cannot come ;  
 Their answer to the call is—*Not at home.*

O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain,  
 The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again !  
 Cards with what rapture, and the polished die,  
 The yawning chasm of indolence supply !  
 Then to the dance, and make the sober moon  
 Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.  
 Blame, Cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball,  
 The snug close party, or the splendid hall,  
 Where Night, down stooping from her ebon throne,  
 Views constellations brighter than her own.  
 'Tis innocent, and harmless and refined,  
 The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.

Innocent ! O if venerable Time  
 Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime,  
 Then, with his silver beard and magic wand,  
 Let Comus rise archbishop of the land ;  
 Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe,  
 Grand metropolitan of all the tribe.

Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast,  
 The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.  
 Rufillus, exquisitely formed by rule,  
 Not of the moral but the dancing school,  
 Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone  
 As tragical as others at his own.

He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score,  
 Then kill a constable, and drink five more ;  
 But he can draw a pattern, make a tart,  
 And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.  
 Go, fool ; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead  
 Your cause before a bar you little dread ;  
 But know, the law that bids the drunkard die,  
 Is far too just to pass the trifler by.  
 Both baby-featured, and of infant size,  
 Viewed from a distance, and with heedless eyes,  
 Folly and Innocence are so alike,  
 The difference, though essential, fails to strike.  
 Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare,  
 A simp'ring count'nance, and a trifling air ;  
 But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect,  
 Delights us, by engaging our respect.  
 Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet,  
 Receives from her both appetite and treat ;  
 But, if he play the glutton and exceed,  
 His benefactress blushes at the deed ;  
 For Nature, nice, as lib'ral to dispense,  
 Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.  
 Daniel ate pulse by choice—example rare !  
 Heav'n bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair.  
 Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan,  
 Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan :  
 He snuffs far off th' anticipated joy ;  
 Turtle and ven'son all his thoughts employ :  
 Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat,  
 O, nauseous !—an emetic for a whet !  
 Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good ?  
 Temperance were no virtue if he could.

That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call,  
 Are hurtful, is a truth confessed by all.

And some, that seem to threaten virtue less,  
Still hurtful in th' abuse, or by th' excess.

Is man then only for his torment placed  
The centre of delights he may not taste?  
Like fabled Tantalus, condemned to hear  
The precious stream still purling in his ear;  
Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst  
With prohibition, and perpetual thirst?  
No, wrangler—Destitute of shame and sense,  
The precept that enjoins him abstinence,  
Forbids him none but the licentious joy,  
Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.  
Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid  
In every bosom where her nest is made,  
Hatch'd by the beams of truth, denies him rest,  
And proves a raging scorpion in his breast.  
No pleasure? Are domestic comforts dead?  
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?  
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,  
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good  
fame?

All these belong to virtue, and all prove  
That virtue has a title to your love.  
Have you no touch of pity, that the poor  
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?  
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,  
Need help, let honest industry provide.  
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart:  
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart.  
No pleasure? has some sickly eastern waste  
Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast?  
Can British Paradise no scenes afford  
To please her sated and indifferent lord?  
Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run  
Quite to the lees? And has religion none?

Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie,  
 And judge you from the kennel and the sty.  
 Delights like these, ye sensual and profane,  
 Ye are bid, begg'd, besought to entertain ;  
 Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off  
 Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough ?  
 Envy the beast then, on whom Heaven bestows  
 Your pleasures, with no curses in the close.

Pleasure admitted in undue degree  
 Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.  
 'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice  
 Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use :  
 Ambition, av'rice, and the lust of fame,  
 And woman, lovely woman, does the same.  
 The heart, surrendered to the ruling power  
 Of some ungoverned passion every hour,  
 Finds by degrees the truths that once bore sway,  
 And all their deep impressions wear away :  
 So coin grows smooth, in traffic current passed,  
 Till Cesar's image is effaced at last.

The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide,  
 In rushes folly with a full-moon tide ;  
 Then welcome errors of whatever size,  
 To justify it by a thousand lies.  
 As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone,  
 And hides the ruin that it feeds upon ;  
 So sophistry cleaves close to and protects  
 Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.  
 Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care,  
 First wish to be imposed on, and then are.  
 And, lest the fulsome artifice should fail,  
 Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil.  
 Not more industrious are the just and true,  
 To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due—

The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth,  
 And call her charms to public notice forth—  
 Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race,  
 To hide the shocking features of her face.  
 Her form with dress and lotion they repair :  
 Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair.

The sacred implement I now employ  
 Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy :  
 A trifle, if it move but to amuse ;  
 But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse,  
 Worse than a poniard in the basest hand,  
 It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads,  
 Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads ;  
 Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,  
 Sniv'ling and driv'ling folly without end ;  
 Whose corresponding misses fill the ream  
 With sentimental frippery and dream,  
 Caught in a delicate soft silken net  
 By some lewd earl, or rakehell baronet :  
 Ye pimps, who under virtue's fair pretence,  
 Steal to the closet of young innocence,  
 And teach her, inexperienced yet and green,  
 To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen ;  
 Who, kindling a combustion of desire,  
 With some cold moral think to quench the fire ;  
 Though all your engineering proves in vain,  
 The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again :  
 O ! that a verse had power, and could command  
 Far, far away these flesh-flies of the land ;  
 Who fasten without mercy on the fair,  
 And suck, and leave a craving maggot there !  
 Howe'er disguised th' inflammatory tale,  
 And covered with a fine-spun specious veil,

Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust  
And relish of their pleasure all to lust.

But the muse, eagle-pinioned, has in view  
A quarry more important still than you ;  
Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away,  
Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius ! all the Muses weep for thee ;  
But every tear shall scald thy memory :  
The Graces too, while virtue at their shrine  
Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine,  
Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast,  
Abhorred the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.  
Thou polished and high-finished foe to truth,  
Graybeard corrupter of our listening youth,  
To purge and skim away the filth of vice  
That so refined it might the more entice ;  
Then pour it on the morals of thy son,  
To taint *his* heart, was worthy of *thine own* !  
Now, while the poison all high life pervades,  
Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades,  
One, and one only, charged with deep regret,  
That thy worse part, thy principles live yet :  
One sad epistle thence may cure mankind  
Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.  
'Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears.  
Our most important are our earliest years ;  
The Mind, impressible and soft, with ease  
Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees,  
And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clew  
That Education gives her, false or true.  
Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong ;  
Man's coltish disposition asks the thong ;  
And without discipline, the fav'rite child,  
Like a neglected forester, runs wild.

But we, as if good qualities would grow  
 Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow :  
 We give some Latin, and a smatch of Greek ;  
 Teach him to fence and figure twice a-week ;  
 And having done, we think the best we can,  
 Praise his proficiency, and dub him man.

From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home ;  
 And thence with all convenient speed to Rome,  
 With rev'rend tutor clad in habit lay,  
 To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day ;  
 With memorandum-book for every town,  
 And ev'ry post, and where the chaise broke down ;  
 His stock, a few French phrases got by heart,  
 With much to learn, but nothing to impart—  
 The youth, obedient to his sire's commands,  
 Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.  
 Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair,  
 With awkward gait, stretched neck, and silly stare,  
 Discover huge cathedrals built with stone,  
 And steeples tow'ring high much like our own ;  
 But show peculiar light by many a grin,  
 At popish practices observed within.

Ere long, some bowing, smirking, smart abbe  
 Remarks two loit'ers, that have lost their way ;  
 And being always primed with *politesse*  
 For men of their appearance and address,  
 With much compassion undertakes the task,  
 To tell them more than they have wit to ask ;  
 Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread,  
 Such as, when legible, were never read,  
 But, being cankered now and half worn out,  
 Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt ;  
 Some headless hero, or some Cæsar shows—  
 Defective only in his Roman nose ;



Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans,  
 Models of Herculanean pots and pans ;  
 And sells them medals, which, if neither rare  
 Nor ancient, will be so preserved with care.

Strange the recital ! from whatever cause  
 His great improvement and new light he draws,  
 The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more,  
 But teems with powers he never felt before :  
 Whether increased momentum, and the force  
 With which from clime to clime he sped his course  
 (As axles sometimes kindle as they go)  
 Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow ;  
 Or whether clearer skies and softer air,  
 That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair,  
 Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran,  
 Unfolded genially and spread the man ;  
 Returning he proclaims by many a grace,  
 By shrugs and strange contortions of his face,  
 How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam,  
 Excels a dunce, that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place,  
 And wisdom falls before exterior grace :  
 We slight the precious kernel of the stone,  
 And toil to polish its rough coat alone.  
 A just deportment, manners graced with ease,  
 Elegant phrase, and figure formed to please  
 Are qualities, that seem to comprehend  
 Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend ;  
 Hence an unfurnished and a listless mind,  
 Though busy, trifling ; empty, though refined ;  
 Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash  
 With indolence and luxury, is trash :  
 While learning, once the man's exclusive pride,  
 Seems verging fast towards the female side

Learning itself, received into a mind  
 By nature weak, or viciously inclined,  
 Serves but to lead philosophers astray,  
 Where children would with ease discern the way.  
 And of all arts sagacious dupes invent,  
 To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent,  
 The worst is—Scripture warped from its intent.

The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased  
 If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased ;  
 But if the rogue have gone a cup too far  
 Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar,  
 It suffers interruption and delay,  
 And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way.  
 When some hypothesis, absurd and vain,  
 Has filled with all its fumes a critic's brain,  
 The text that sorts not with his darling whim,  
 Though plain to others, is obscure to him.  
 The will made subject to a lawless force,  
 All is irregular and out of course ;  
 And judgment drunk, and bribed to loose his way,  
 Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noon-day.

A critic on the sacred book should be  
 Candid and learned, dispassionate and free :  
 Free from the wayward bias bigots feel,  
 From fancy's influence, and intemp'rate zeal :  
 But, above all (or let the wretch refrain.  
 Nor touch the page he cannot but profane,)  
 Free from the domineering power of lust ;  
 A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address,  
 Thou God of our idolatry, the Press ?  
 By thee religion, liberty, and laws,  
 Exert their influence, and advance their cause ;  
 By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befel,  
 Diffused, make earth the vestibule of Hell ;

Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise ;  
 Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies ;  
 Like Eden's dread probationary tree,  
 Knowledge of good and evil is from thee.

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest,  
 Till half mankind were like himself possessed.  
 Philosophers who darken and put out  
 Eternal truth by everlasting doubt ;  
 Church quacks, with passions under no command,  
 Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,  
 Discov'ers of they know not what, confined  
 Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind ;  
 To streams of popular opinion drawn,  
 Deposite in those shallows all their spawn.  
 The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around,  
 Pois'ning the waters where their swarms abound.  
 Scorned by the nobler tenants of the flood,  
 Minnows and gudgeons gorge th' unwholesome food.  
 The propagated myriads spread so fast,  
 E'en Lewenhoeck himself would stand aghast,  
 Employed to calculate the enormous sum,  
 And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome.  
 Is this hyperbole ? The world well known,  
 Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes  
 From every hair-brained proselyte he makes ;  
 And therefore prints. Himself but half-deceived,  
 Till others have the soothing tale believed.  
 Hence comment after comment, spun as fine  
 As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line :  
 Hence the same word, that bids our lust obey,  
 Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.  
 If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend,  
 Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend :

If languages and copies all cry, No—  
 Somebody proved it centuries ago.  
 Like trout pursued, the critic in despair  
 Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there.  
 Woman, whom custom has forbid to fly  
 The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why,)  
 With all the simple and unlettered poor,  
 Admire his learning, and almost adore.  
 Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,  
 With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies! (for indiff'rent in your cause  
 I should deserve to forfeit all applause,)  
 Whatever shocks or gives the least offence  
 To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,  
 (Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)  
 Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,  
 Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.  
 Committed once into the public arms,  
 The baby seems to smile with added charms.  
 Like something precious ventured far from shore,  
 'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.  
 He views it with complacency supreme,  
 Solicits kind attention to his dream ;  
 And daily more enamoured of the cheat,  
 Kneels, and asks Heav'n to bless the dear deceit.  
 So one, whose story serves at least to show  
 Men loved their own productions long ago,  
 Wooed an unfeeling statue for his wife,  
 Nor rested till the gods had given it life.  
 If some mere driv'ler suck the sugared fib,  
 One that still needs his leading-string and bib,  
 And praise his genius, he is soon repaid  
 In praise applied to the same part—his head :

For 'tis a rule, that holds for ever true,  
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,  
Affable, humble, diffident and mild ;  
Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke :  
Your blund'rer is as sturdy as a rock.  
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,  
A muleteer's the man to set him right.  
First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,  
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.  
Tell him he wanders ; that his error leads  
To fatal ills ; that, though the path he treads  
Be flow'ry, and he see no cause of fear,  
Death and the pains of Hell attend him there—  
In vain ; the slave of arrogance and pride,  
He has no hearing on the prudent side.  
His still refuted quirks he still repeats ;  
New-raised objections with new quibbles meets ;  
Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,  
He dies disputing, and the contest ends—  
But not the mischiefs ; they, still left behind,  
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill ;  
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will ;  
And with a clear and shining lamp supplied,  
First put it out, then take it for a guide.  
Halting on crutches of unequal size,  
One leg by truth supported, one by lies .  
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,  
Secure of nothing—but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,  
And these reciprocally those again.  
The mind and conduct mutually imprint  
And stamp their image in each other's mint :

Each, sire and damn, of an infernal race,  
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view,  
Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue.  
For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wing,  
Or when it first forsakes th' elastic string,  
It err but little from the intended line,  
It falls at last far wide of his design :  
So he, who seeks a mansion in the sky,  
Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye :  
That prize belongs to none but the sincere ;  
The least obliquity is fatal here.

With caution taste the sweet Circean cup :  
He that sips often, at last drinks it up.  
Habits are soon assumed ; but when we strive  
To strip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.  
Called to the temple of impure delight,  
He that abstains, and he alone, does right.  
If a wish wander that way, call it home ;  
He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam.  
But if you pass the threshold, you are caught ;  
Die then, if power Almighty save you not.  
There hard'ning by degrees, till double steeled,  
Take leave of nature's God, and God revealed ;  
Then laugh at all you trembled at before ;  
And, joining the free thinker's brutal roar,  
Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense—  
That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense.  
If clemency, revolted by abuse  
Be damnable, then damned without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence, when they will  
The storm of passion, and say, *Peace, be still* ;  
But "*Thus far and no farther,*" when addressed  
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,

Implies authority that never can,  
That never ought to be the lot of man.  
But muse forbear; long flights forbode a fall;  
Strike on the deep toned chord the sum of all.  
Hear the just law—the judgment of the skies!  
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies:  
And he that *will* be cheated to the last,  
Delusions strong as Hell shall bind him fast.  
But if the wand'rer his mistake discern,  
Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return,  
Bewildered once, must he bewail his loss  
For ever and for ever? No—the cross!  
There and there only (though the Deist rave,  
And Atheist, if Earth bear so base a slave;)   
There and there only is the power to save.  
There no delusive hope invites despair;  
No mock'ry meets you, no deception there.  
The spells and charms, that blinded you before,  
All vanish there, and fascinate no more.

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice—  
The cross, once seen, is death to every vice:  
Else, He that hung there suffered all his pain,  
Bled, groaned, and agonized, and died, in vain.

## TRUTH.

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Pensantur trutina. HOR. Lib. ii. Epist. 1.  
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MAN, on the dubious waves of error tossed,  
His ship half-foundered, and his compass lost,  
Sees, far as human optics may command,  
A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land :  
Spreads all his canvass, every sinew plies ;  
Pants for't, aims at it, enters it, and dies !  
Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes,  
His well-built systems, philosophic dreams ;  
Deceitful views of future bliss farewell !—  
He reads his sentence at the flames of Hell.

Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward  
Of virtue, and yet lose it ! Wherefore hard ?  
He that would win the race must guide his horse  
Obedient to the customs of the course ;  
Else, though unequalled to the goal he flies,  
A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.  
Grace leads the right way : if you choose the wrong,  
Take it and perish ; but restrain your tongue ;  
Charge not, with light sufficient, and left free,  
Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

O how unlike the complex works of man,  
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan !  
No meretricious graces to beguile,  
No clust'ring ornaments to clog the pile ;  
From ostentation as from weakness free,  
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,  
Majestic in its own simplicity.



Inscribed above the portal, from afar  
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,  
 Legible only by the light they give,  
 Stand the soul-quick'ning words—BELIEVE AND LIVE.  
 Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,  
 Despise the plain direction, and are lost.  
 Heaven on such terms! (they cry with proud disdain)  
 Incredible, impossible, and vain!—  
 Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey;  
 And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.  
 These are the sober, in whose cooler brains  
 Some thought of immortality remains;  
 The rest, too busy or too gay to wait  
 On the sad theme, their everlasting state,  
 Sport for a day and perish in a night—  
 The foam upon the waters not so light.

Who judged the Pharisee? What odious cause  
 Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws?  
 Had he seduced a virgin, wronged a friend,  
 Or stabbed a man to serve some private end?  
 Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray  
 From the strict duties of the sacred day?  
 Sit long and late at the carousing board?  
 (Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord)  
 No—the man's morals were exact; what then?  
 'Twas his ambition to be seen of men;  
 His virtues were his pride; and that one vice  
 Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;  
 He wore them as fine trappings for a show,  
 A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau.

The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see—  
 Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he!  
 Meridian sun-beams tempt him to unfold  
 His radiant glories, azure, green and gold:

He treads as if, some solemn music near,  
 His measured step were governed by his ear :  
 And seems to say—Ye meaner fowl, give place,  
 I am all splendour, dignity, and grace !

Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes,  
 Though he too has a glory in his plumes.  
 He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien  
 To the close copse, or far sequestered green,  
 And shines without desiring to be seen.  
 The plea of works, as arrogant and vain,  
 Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain ;  
 Not more affronted by avowed neglect,  
 Than by the mere dissembler's feigned respect.  
 What ! is all righteousness that men devise ?  
 What—but a sordid bargain for the skies ?  
 But Christ as soon would abdicate his own,  
 As stoop from Heaven to sell the proud a throne.

His dwelling a recess in some rude rock,  
 Book, beads, and maple-dish, his meagre stock ;  
 In shirt of hair, and weeds of canvass dressed,  
 Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has blessed ;  
 Adust with stripes told out for every crime,  
 And sore tormented long before his time ;  
 His prayer preferred to saints that cannot aid ;  
 His praise postponed, and never to be paid—  
 See the sage hermit, by mankind admired,  
 With all that bigotry adopts inspired,  
 Wearing out life in his religious whim,  
 Till his religious whimsey wears out him.  
 His works, his abstinence, his zeal allowed,  
 You think him humble—God accounts him proud ;  
 High in demand, though lowly in pretence,  
 Of all his conduct, this the genuine sense—  
 My penitential stripes, my streaming blood,  
 Have purchased Heaven, and prove my title good.

Turn eastward now, and Fancy shall apply  
 To your weak sight her telescopic eye.  
 The Bramin kindles on his own bare head  
 The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade.  
 His voluntary pains, severe and long,  
 Would give a barb'rous air to British song ;  
 No grand inquisitor could worse invent,  
 That he contrives to suffer, well content.

Which is the saintlier worthy of the two ?  
 Past all dispute, yon Anchorite, say you.  
 Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name ?  
 I say the Bramin has the fairer claim.  
 If suff'rings, Scripture no where recommends,  
 Devised by self to answer selfish ends,  
 Give saintship, then all Europe must agree  
 Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he.

The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear,  
 And prejudice have left a passage clear)  
 Pride has attained its most luxuriant growth,  
 And poisoned every virtue in them both.  
 Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean ;  
 Humility may clothe an English dean ;  
 That grace was Cowper's—his, confessed by all—  
 Though placed in golden Durham's second stall.  
 Not all the plenty of a bishop's board,  
 His palace, and his lacqueys, and " My Lord,"  
 More nourish pride, that condescending vice,  
 Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice :  
 It thrives in misery, and abundant grows :  
 In misery fools upon themselves impose.

But why before us Protestants produce  
 An Indian mystic, or a French recluse ?  
 Their sin is plain ; but what have we to fear,  
 Reformed and well instructed ? You shall hear

Yon ancient prude, whose withered features show  
She might be young some forty years ago,  
Her elbows pinioned close upon her hips,  
Her head erect, her fan upon her lips,  
Her eye-brows arched, her eyes both gone astray  
To watch yon amorous couple in their play,  
With bony and unkerchiefed neck defies  
The rude inclemency of wintry skies,  
And sails with lappet-head and mincing airs  
Duly at chink of bell to morning prayers.  
To thrift and parsimony much inclined,  
She yet allows herself that boy behind ;  
The shiv'ring urchin, bending as he goes,  
With slipshod heels, and dewdrop at his nose ;  
His predecessor's coat advanced to wear,  
Which future pages yet are doomed to share,  
Carries her Bible tucked beneath his arm,  
And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account,  
Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount,  
Though not a grace appears on strictest search,  
But that she fasts, and *item*, goes to church.  
Conscious of age, she recollects her youth,  
And tells, not always with an eye to truth,  
Who spanned her waist, and who, where'er he came,  
Scrawled upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name ;  
Who stole her slipper, filled it with tokay,  
And drank the little bumper every day.  
Of temper as envenomed as an asp,  
Censorious, and her every word a wasp ;  
In faithful mem'ry she records the crimes,  
Or real, or fictitious, of the times ;  
Laughs at the reputations she has torn,  
And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,  
 Of malice fed while flesh is mortified :  
 Take, Madam, the reward of all your prayers,  
 Where hermits and where Bramins meet with theirs ;  
 Your portion is with them.—Nay, never frown,  
 But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist, attend—your brushes and your paint—  
 Produce them—take a chair—now draw a saint.  
 Oh sorrowful and sad ! the streaming tears  
 Channel her cheeks—a Niobe appears !  
 Is this a saint ? Throw tints and all away—  
 True piety is cheerful as the day,  
 Will weep, indeed, and heave a pitying groan  
 For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of saints in view ?  
 Why falls the gospel like a gracious dew ?  
 To call up plenty from the teeming earth,  
 Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth ?  
 Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved  
 From servile fear, or be the more enslaved ?  
 To loose the links that galled mankind before,  
 Or bind them faster on, and add still more ?  
 The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove,  
 Or, if a chain, the golden one of love ;  
 No fear attends to quench his glowing fires,  
 What fear he feels, his gratitude inspires.  
 Shall he, for such deliv'rance freely wrought,  
 Recompense ill ? He trembles at the thought.  
 His Master's interest and his own combined  
 Prompt every movement of his heart and mind :  
 Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince,  
 His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course  
 His life should prove that he perceives their force ;

His utmost he can render is but small—  
 The principle and motive all in all.  
 You have two servants—Tom, an arch, sly rogue,  
 From top to toe the Geta now in vogue,  
 Genteel in figure, easy in address,  
 Moves without noise, and swift as an express,  
 Reports a message with a pleasing grace,  
 Expert in all the duties of his place ;  
 Say, on what hinge does his obedience move ?  
 Has he a world of gratitude and love ?  
 No, not a spark—'tis all mere sharper's play ;  
 He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay :  
 Reduce his wages, or get rid of her,  
 Tom quits you, with—Your most obedient, Sir.

The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand,  
 Watches your eye, anticipates command ;  
 Sighs if perhaps your appetite should fail ;  
 And if he but suspects a frown, turns pale ;  
 Consults all day your int'rest and your ease,  
 Richly rewarded if he can but please ;  
 And proud to make his firm attachment known,  
 To save your life would nobly risk his own.

Now which stands highest in your serious thought ?  
 Charles, without doubt, say you—and so he ought :  
 One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds,  
 Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus Heaven approves, as honest and sincere,  
 The work of gen'rous love and filial fear ;  
 But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge  
 Scorns the base hireling, and the slavish drudge.  
 Where dwell these matchless saints ?—old Curio cries.  
 E'en at your side, Sir, and before your eyes,  
 The favoured few—the enthusiasts you despise.  
 And pleased, at heart, because on holy ground  
 Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found,

Reproach a people with his single fall,  
And cast his filthy raiment at them all.  
Attend!—an apt similitude shall show  
Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain,  
Blown all aslant, a driving dashing rain,  
Peal upon peal redoubling all around,  
Shakes it again and faster to the ground ;  
Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play,  
Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.  
Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed,  
And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed ;  
Now drenched throughout, and hopeless of his case,  
He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.

Suppose, unlooked for in a scene so rude,  
Long hid by interposing hill or wood,  
Some mansion, neat and elegantly dressed,  
By some kind hospitable heart possessed,  
Offer him warmth, security, and rest ;  
Think with what pleasure, safe and at his ease,  
He hears the tempest howling in the trees ;  
What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ,  
While danger past is turned to present joy.

So fares it with the sinner, when he feels  
A growing dread of vengeance at his heels :  
His conscience, like a glassy lake before,  
Lashed into foaming waves, begins to roar ;  
The law grown clamorous, though silent long,  
Arraigns him—charges him with every wrong—  
Asserts the rights of his offended lord,  
And death or restitution is the word.

The last impossible, he fears the first,  
And, having well deserved, expects the worst.  
Then welcome refuge, and a peaceful home ;  
Oh for a shelter from the wrath to come !

Crush me, ye rocks! ye falling mountains hide,  
 Or bury me in Ocean's angry tide—  
 The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes  
 I dare not—And you need not, God replies;  
 The remedy you want I freely give:  
 The Book shall teach you—read, believe, and live  
 'Tis done—the raging storm is heard no more,  
 Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore:  
 And Justice, guardian of the dread command,  
 Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand.  
 A soul redeemed demands a life of praise;  
 Hence the complexion of his future days,  
 Hence a demeanour holy and unspecked,  
 And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblameable and just,  
 Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust:  
 They never sin—or if (as all offend)  
 Some trivial slips their daily walk attend,  
 The poor are near at hand, the charge is small,  
 A slight gratuity atones for all.  
 For though the Pope has lost his int'rest here,  
 And pardons are not sold as once they were,  
 No papist more desirous to compound,  
 Than some grave sinners upon English ground.  
 That plea refuted, other quirks they seek—  
 Mercy is infinite, and man is weak:  
 The future shall obliterate the past,  
 And Heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.

Come then—a still, small whisper in your ear—  
 He has no hope who never had a fear;  
 And he that never doubted of his state,  
 He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late.

The path to bliss abounds with many a snare;  
 Learning is one, and wit, however rare.



The Frenchman, first in literary fame,  
 (Mention him if you please. Voltaire?—The same.)  
 With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied,  
 Lived long, wrote much, laughed heartily, and died.  
 The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew  
*Bon mots* to gall the Christian and the Jew ;  
 An infidel in health, but what when sick ?  
 Oh—then a text would touch him at the quick.  
 View him at Paris in his last career,  
 Surrounding throngs the demigod revere ;  
 Exalted on his pedestal of pride,  
 And fumed with frankincense on every side,  
 He begs their flattery with his latest breath,  
 And smothered in't at last, is praised to death.

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,  
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store ;  
 Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,  
 Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,  
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;  
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,  
 Has little understanding, and no wit,  
 Receives no praise ; but, though her lot be such,  
 (Toilsome and indigent) she renders much ;  
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—  
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew ;  
 And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes  
 Her title to a treasure in the skies.

O happy peasant ! O unhappy bard !  
 His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward ;  
 He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,  
 She never heard of half a mile from home :  
 He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,  
 She safe in the simplicity of hers.

Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound  
In science, win one inch of heavenly ground.  
And is it not a mortifying thought  
The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?  
No—the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget  
One pleasure lost, lose Heaven without regret—  
Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer;  
Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there.  
Not that the Former of us all, in this,  
Or aught he does, is governed by caprice;  
The supposition is replete with sin,  
And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in.  
Not so—the silver trumpet's heavenly call  
Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all:  
Kings are invited, and would kings obey,  
No slaves on earth more welcome were than they:  
But royalty, nobility, and state,  
Are such a dead preponderating weight,  
That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem)  
In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.  
'Tis open, and ye cannot enter—why?  
Because ye will not, Conyers would reply—  
And he says much that many may dispute,  
And cavil at with ease, but none refute.  
O blessed effect of penury and want;  
The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant!  
No soil like poverty for growth divine,  
As leanest land supplies the richest wine.  
Earth gives too little, giving only bread,  
To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head:  
To them the sounding jargon of the schools  
Seems what it is—a cap and bell for fools:  
The light they walk by, kindled from above,  
Shows them the shortest way to life and love:

They, strangers to the controversial field,  
Where deists, always foiled, yet scorn to yield,  
And never checked by what impedes the wise,  
Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unlettered small:  
Ye have much cause for envy—but not all.  
We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways,  
And one who wears a coronet and prays:  
Like gleanings of an olive tree they show,  
Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily upon the gospel plan,  
That question has its answer—What is man?  
Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch;  
An instrument, whose cords upon the stretch,  
And strained to the last screw that he can bear,  
Yield only discord in his Maker's ear:  
Once the blest residence of truth divine,  
Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine,  
Where, in his own oracular abode,  
Dwelt visibly the light-creating God;  
But made long since, like Babylon of old  
A den of mischiefs never to be told:  
And she, once mistress of the realms around,  
Now scattered wide, and no where to be found,  
As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne,  
By native power and energy her own,  
As nature, at her own peculiar cost,  
Restore to man the glories he has lost.  
Go—bid the winter cease to chill the year,  
Replace the wand'ring comet in his sphere,  
Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd for hour)  
The self-restoring arm of human power.  
But what is man in his own proud esteem?  
Hear him—himself the poet and the theme:

A monarch clothed with majesty and awe,  
 His mind his kingdom, and his will his law,  
 Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes,  
 Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies,  
 Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod,  
 And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God!  
 So sings he, charmed with his own mind and form,  
 The song magnificent—the theme a worm!  
 Himself so much the source of his delight,  
 His Maker has no beauty in his sight.  
 See where he sits, contemplative and fixed,  
 Pleasure and wonder in his features mixed,  
 His passions tamed and all at his control,  
 How perfect the composure of his soul!  
 Complacency has breathed a gentle gale  
 O'er all his thoughts, and swelled his easy sail:  
 His books well trimmed and in the gayest style  
 Like regimental coxcombs rank and file,  
 Adorn his intellects as well as shelves,  
 And teach him notions splendid as themselves:  
 The Bible only stands neglected there,  
 Though that of all most worthy of his care;  
 And like an infant troublesome awake,  
 Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.

What shall the man deserve of human kind,  
 Whose happy skill and industry combined  
 Shall prove (what argument could never yet)  
 The Bible an imposture and a cheat?  
 The praises of the libertine professed,  
 The worst of men, and curses of the best.  
 Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes;  
 The dying, trembling at the awful close;  
 Where the betrayed, forsaken, and oppressed,  
 The thousands whom the world forbids to rest;

Where should they find, (those comforts at an end  
The Scripture yields) or hope to find, a friend?  
Sorrow might muse herself to madness then,  
And seeking exile from the sight of men,  
Bury herself in solitude profound,  
Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.  
Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life,  
Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife.  
The jury meet, the coroner is short,  
And lunacy the verdict of the court.  
Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known,  
Such lunacy is ignorance alone :  
They knew not, what some bishops may not know,  
That Scripture is the only cure of woe ;  
That field of promise, how it flings abroad  
Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road !  
The soul, reposing on assured relief,  
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,  
Forgets her labour as she toils along,  
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

But the same word, that like the polished share,  
Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care,  
Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow,  
That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.  
Oh that unwelcome voice of heavenly love,  
Sad messenger of mercy from above !  
How does it grate upon his thankless ear,  
Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear !  
His will and judgment at continual strife,  
That civil war imbitters all his life :  
In vain he points his powers against the skies,  
In vain he closes or averts his eyes,  
Truth will intrude—she bids him yet beware ;  
And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.

Though various foes against the truth combine,  
 Pride above all opposes her design ;  
 Pride, of a growth superior to the rest,  
 The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest,  
 Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage,  
 Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage.

And is the soul indeed so lost?—she cries,  
 Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise?  
 Torpid and dull beneath a frozen zone,  
 Has she no spark that may be deemed her own?  
 Grant her indebted to what zealots call  
 Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all—  
 Some beams of rectitude she yet displays,  
 Some love of virtue, and some power to praise ;  
 Can lift herself above corporeal things,  
 And, soaring on her own unborrowed wings,  
 Possess herself of all that's good or true,  
 Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.  
 Past indiscretion is a venial crime,  
 And if the youth, unmellowed yet by time,  
 Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude,  
 Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude,  
 Maturer years shall happier stores produce  
 And meliorate the well-concocted juice.  
 Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal,  
 To justice she may make her bold appeal,  
 And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind,  
 The worthless and unfruitful of mankind.  
 Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied  
 Retorts th' affront against the crown of Pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,  
 And the fool with it, who insults his Lord.  
 The atonement, a Redeemer's love has wrought,  
 Is not for you—the righteous need it not.

Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets,  
 The worn-out nuisance of the public streets,  
 Herself from morn to night, from night to morn,  
 Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn :  
 The gracious shower, unlimited and free,  
 Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee.  
 Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift,  
 That man is dead in sin, and life a gift.

Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth,  
 Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both ?  
 Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe,  
 For ignorance of what they could not know ?  
 That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue ;  
 Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong.  
 Truly not I—the partial light men have,  
 My creed persuades me, well employed may save ;  
 While he that scorns the noonday beam, perverse,  
 Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.  
 Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind  
 Left sensuality and dross behind,  
 Possess, for me, their undisputed lot,  
 And take unenvied the reward they sought :  
 But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea,  
 Not blind by choice, but destined not to see.  
 Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame  
 Celestial, though they knew not whence it came,  
 Derived from the same source of light and grace,  
 That guides the Christian in his swifter race ;  
 Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law,  
 That rule, pursued with rev'rence and with awe,  
 Led them, however falt'ring, faint, and slow,  
 From what they knew, to what they wished to know.  
 But let not him, that shares a brighter day,  
 Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray,

Prefer the twilight of a darker time,  
 And deem his base stupidity no crime :  
 The wretch, who slights the bounty of the skies,  
 And sinks, while favoured with the means to rise,  
 Shall find them rated at their full amount ;  
 The good he scorned all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came,  
 Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame,  
 From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law—  
 Life for obedience, death for every flaw.  
 When the great Sovereign would his will express,  
 He gives a perfect rule ; what can he less ?  
 And guards it with a sanction as severe  
 As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear :  
 Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim,  
 And man might safely trifle with his name.  
 He bids him glow with unremitting love  
 To all on earth, and to himself above ;  
 Condemns th' injurious deed, the sland'rous tongue,  
 The thought that meditates a brother's wrong :  
 Brings not alone the more conspicuous part,  
 His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark ! universal nature shook and groaned,  
 'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthroned !  
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need,  
 Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.  
 What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?  
 That self-renouncing wisdom, learned before,  
 Had shed immortal glories on your brow,  
 That all your virtues cannot purchase now.  
 All joy to the believer ! He can speak—  
 Trembling, yet happy, confident, yet meek.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,  
 And cut up all my follies by the root,



I never trusted in an arm but thine,  
Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine :  
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,  
Were but the feeble efforts of a child :  
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,  
That they proceeded from a grateful heart ;  
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,  
Forgive their evil, and accept their good—  
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea  
Is what it was, dependence upon thee ;  
While struggling in the vale of tears below,  
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.

Angelic gratulations rend the skies,  
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise,  
Humility is crowned, and Faith receives the prize.

## EXPOSTULATION.

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Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli  
Dona sines? VIRGIL.

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WHY weeps the muse for England? What appears  
In England's case, to move the muse to tears?  
From side to side of her delightful isle,  
Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile?  
Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer  
A new-found luxury not seen in her?  
Where, under heaven, is pleasure more pursued,  
Or where does cold reflection less intrude?  
Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn,  
Poured out from plenty's overflowing horn;  
Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies  
The fervour and the force of Indian skies;  
Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits  
To pour his golden tide through all her gates;  
Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice  
Of eastern groves, and oceans floored with ice,  
Forbid in vain to push his daring way  
To darker climes, or climes of brighter day;  
Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll,  
From the world's girdle to the frozen pole;  
The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets,  
Her vaults below, where every vintage meets;  
Her theatres, her revels, and her sports;  
The scenes to which not youth alone resorts,  
But age, in spite of weakness and of pain,  
Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again—

All speak her happy : let the muse look round  
 From East to West, no sorrow can be found :  
 Or only what, in cottages confined,  
 Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.  
 Then wherefore weep for England ? What appears  
 In England's case to move the muse to tears ?

The prophet wept for Israel ; wished his eyes  
 Were fountains fed with infinite supplies :  
 For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong ;  
 There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue ;  
 Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools,  
 As interest biassed knaves, or fashion fools :  
 Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door ;  
 Oppression, labouring hard to grind the poor ;  
 The partial balance, and deceitful weight ;  
 The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate ;  
 Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,  
 And the dull service of the lip were there.  
 Her women, insolent and self-caressed,  
 By Vanity's unwearied finger dressed,  
 Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart  
 To modest cheeks, and borrowed one from art ;  
 Were just such trifles, without worth or use,  
 As silly pride and idleness produce ;  
 Curled, scented, furbelowed, and flounced around,  
 With feet too delicate to touch the ground,  
 They stretched the neck, and rolled the wanton eye,  
 And sighed for every fool that fluttered by.

He saw his people slaves to every lust,  
 Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust ;  
 He heard the wheels of an avenging God  
 Groan heavily along the distant road ;  
 Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass  
 To let the military deluge pass ;

Jerusalem a prey, her glory soiled,  
Her princes captive, and her treasures spoiled ;  
Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,  
Stamped with his foot, and smote upon his thigh :  
But wept, and stamped, and smote his thigh in vain ;  
Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,  
And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit  
Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute :  
They scorned his inspiration and his theme,  
Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream :  
With self-indulgence winged the fleeting hours,  
Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.  
Long time Assyria bound them in her chain,  
Till penitence had purged the public stain,  
And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved,  
Returned them happy to the land they loved :  
There, proof against prosperity, a while  
They stood the test of her insnaring smile,  
And had the grace in scenes of peace to show  
The virtue they had learned in scenes of woe  
But man is frail, and can but ill sustain  
A long immunity from grief and pain ;  
And after all the joys that Plenty leads,  
With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds.

When he that ruled them with a shepherd's rod,  
In form a man, in dignity a God,  
Came, not expected in that humble guise,  
To sift and search them with unerring eyes,  
He found, concealed beneath a fair outside,  
The filth of rottenness, and worm of pride ;  
Their piety a system of deceit,  
Scripture employed to sanctify the cheat ;  
The Pharisee the dupe of his own art,  
Self-idolized, and yet a knave at heart.

When nations are to perish in their sins,  
 'Tis in the church the leprosy begins ;  
 The priest, whose office is with zeal sincere  
 To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,  
 Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,  
 While others poison what the flock must drink ;  
 Or, waking at the call of lust alone,  
 Infuses lies and errors of his own :  
 His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure ;  
 And, tainted by the very means of cure,  
 Catch from each other a contagious spot,  
 The foul forerunner of a general rot.  
 Then truth is hushed, that Heresy may preach ;  
 And all is trash that Reason cannot reach :  
 Then God's own image on the soul impressed  
 Becomes a mockery, and a standing jest ;  
 And faith, the root whence only can arise  
 The graces of a life that wins the skies,  
 Loses at once all value and esteem,  
 Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream :  
 Then ceremony leads her bigots forth,  
 Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth ;  
 While truths, on which eternal things depend,  
 Find not, or hardly find, a single friend :  
 As soldiers watch the signal of command,  
 They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand ;  
 Happy to fill religion's vacant place  
 With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

Such, when the Teacher of his church was there,  
 People and priest, the sons of Israel were ;  
 Stiff in the letter, lax in the design  
 And import of their oracles divine ;  
 Their learning legendary, false, absurd,  
 And yet exalted above God's own word ;

They drew a curse from an intended good,  
Puffed up with gifts they never understood.  
He judged them with as terrible a frown,  
As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down.  
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs,  
Had grace for other's sin, but none for theirs ;  
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran—  
Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man ;  
And tricks and turns, that fancy may devise,  
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies.  
Th' astonished vulgar trembled when he tore  
The mask from faces never seen before ;  
He stripped the impostors in the noonday sun,  
Showed that they followed all they seemed to shun ;  
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept  
As private as the chambers where they slept ;  
The temple and its holy rites profaned  
By mummeries, he that dwelt in it disdained ;  
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times  
Could act extortion and the worst of crimes,  
Washed with a neatness scrupulously nice,  
And free from every taint but that of vice.  
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace  
When Obstinacy once has conquered Grace.  
They saw distemper healed, and life restored,  
In answer to the fiat of his word ;  
Confessed the wonder, and with daring tongue  
Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.  
They knew by sure prognostics seen on high,  
The future tone and temper of the sky ;  
But, grave dissemblers ! could not understand  
That Sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.  
Ask now of history's authentic page,  
And call up evidence from every age ;

Display with busy and laborious hand  
The blessings of the most indebted land ;  
What nation will you find, whose annals prove  
So rich an interest in Almighty love ?  
Where dwell they now, where dwelt in ancient day  
A people planted, watered, blest as they ?  
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim  
The favours poured upon the Jewish name ;  
Their freedom purchased for them at the cost  
Of all their hard oppressors valued most ;  
Their title to a country not their own  
Made sure by prodigies till then unknown ;  
For them the states they left, made waste and void ;  
For them the states to which they went, destroyed .  
A cloud to measure out their march by day,  
By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way ;  
That moving signal summoning, when best,  
Their host to move, and when it stayed, to rest.  
For them the rocks dissolved into a flood,  
The dews condensed into angelic food,  
Their very garments sacred, old yet new,  
And Time forbid to touch them as he flew ;  
Streams, swelled above the bank, enjoined to stand,  
While they passed through to their appointed land ;  
Their leader armed with meekness, zeal, and love,  
And graced with clear credentials from above ;  
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing ;  
Their God their captain,\* lawgiver, and king ;  
Crowned with a thousand victories, and at last  
Lords of the conquered soil, there rooted fast,  
In peace possessing what they won by war,  
Their name far published, and revered as far—

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\* Vide Joshua v. 14.

Where will you find a race like theirs, endowed  
With all that man e'er wished, or Heaven bestowed ?

They, and they only, amongst all mankind,  
Received the transcript of the eternal mind ;  
Were trusted with his own engraven laws,  
And constituted guardians of his cause ;  
Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call,  
And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all.  
In vain the nations, that had seen them rise  
With fierce and envious yet admiring eyes,  
Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were  
By power divine, and skill that could not err,  
Had they maintained allegiance firm and sure,  
And kept the faith immaculate and pure,  
Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome  
Had found one city not to be o'ercome ;  
And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurled  
Had bid defiance to the warring world.  
But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds,  
As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.  
Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin,  
They set up self, that idol god, within ;  
Viewed a Deliverer with disdain and hate,  
Who left them still a tributary state ;  
Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free  
From a worse yoke, and nailed it to the tree :  
There was the consummation and the crown,  
The flower of Israel's infamy full blown ;  
Thence date their sad declension and their fall,  
Their woes not yet repealed, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day,  
And the most favoured land, look where we may.  
Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes  
Had poured the day, and cleared the Roman skies ;



In other climes perhaps creative Art,  
 With power surpassing theirs, performed her part,  
 Might give more life to marble, or might fill  
 The glowing tablets with a juster skill ;  
 Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes  
 With all the embroidery of poetic dreams ;  
 'Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan  
 That Truth and Mercy had revealed to man ;  
 And while the World beside, that plan unknown,  
 Deified useless wood, or senseless stone,  
 They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers,  
 And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs.

Their glory faded, and their race dispersed,  
 The last of nations now, though once the first ;  
 They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn,  
 Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn :  
 If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us,  
 Peeled, scattered, and exterminated thus ;  
 If Vice received her retribution due,  
 When we were visited, what hope for you ?  
 When God arises with an awful frown  
 To punish lust, or pluck presumption down ;  
 When gifts perverted, or not duly prized,  
 Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised,  
 Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand  
 To pour down wrath upon a thankless land ;  
 He will be found impartially severe,  
 Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear

O Israel, of all nations most undone !  
 Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone ;  
 Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and rased,  
 And thou a worshipper, e'en where thou mayest ;  
 Thy services once holy, without spot,  
 Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot ;

Thy Levites, once a consecrated host,  
 No longer Levites, and their lineage lost ;  
 And thou thyself o'er every country sown,  
 With none on Earth that thou canst call thine own ;  
 Cry aloud, thou, that sittest in the dust,  
 Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust ;  
 Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears ;  
 Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears ;  
 But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar,  
 And fling their foam against thy chalky shore ?  
 Mistress, at least while Providence shall please,  
 And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas—  
 Why, having kept good faith, and often shown  
 Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none ?  
 Thou that hast set the persecuted free,  
 None interposes now to succour thee.  
 Countries indebted to thy power, that shine  
 With light derived from thee, would smother thine ;  
 Thy very children watch for thy disgrace—  
 A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face.  
 Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year,  
 With sums Peruvian mines could never clear ;  
 As if, like arches built with skilful hand,  
 The more 'twere pressed the firmer it would stand.

The cry in all thy ships is still the same,  
 Speed us away to battle and to fame.  
 Thy mariners explore the wide expanse,  
 Impatient to descry the flags of France ;  
 But, though they fight as thine have ever fought,  
 Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.  
 Thy senate is a scene of civil jar,  
 Chaos of contrarieties at war ;

Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light,  
Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight ;  
Where Obstinacy takes his sturdy stand,  
To disconcert what Policy has planned ;  
Where Policy is busied all night long  
In setting right what Faction has set wrong ;  
Where flails of oratory thrash the floor  
That yields them chaff, and dust, and nothing more.  
Thy racked inhabitants repine, complain,  
Taxed till the brow of Labour sweats in vain ;  
War lays a burden on the reeling state,  
And peace does nothing to relieve the weight ;  
Successive loads succeeding broils impose,  
And sighing millions prophesy the close.

Is adverse Providence when pondered well,  
So dimly writ, or difficult to spell,  
Thou canst not read with readiness and ease  
Providence adverse in events like these ?  
Know then that heavenly wisdom on this ball  
Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all ;  
That, while laborious and quick-thoughted-man  
Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan,  
He first conceives, then perfects his design,  
As a mere instrument in hands divine :  
Blind to the working of that secret power,  
That balances the wings of every hour,  
The busy trifler dreams himself alone,  
Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.  
States thrive and wither as moons wax and wane,  
E'en as his will and his decrees ordain :  
While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway,  
They flourish ; and as these decline, decay :  
In just resentment of his injured laws,  
He pours contempt on them and on their cause ;

Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart  
 The web of every scheme they have at heart ;  
 Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust  
 The pillars of support, in which they trust,  
 And do his errand of disgrace and shame  
 On the chief strength and glory of the frame.  
 None ever yet impeded what he wrought,  
 None bars him out from his most secret thought :  
 Darkness itself before his eye is light,  
 And Hell's close mischief naked in his sight.

Stand now and judge thyself—Hast thou incurred  
 His anger, who can waste thee with a word,  
 Who poises and proportions sea and land,  
 Weighing them in the hollow of his hand,  
 And in whose awful sight all nations seem  
 As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream ?  
 Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors)  
 Claimed all the glory of thy prosperous wars ?  
 Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem  
 Of his just praise, to lavish it on them ?  
 Hast thou not learned, what thou art often told,  
 A truth still sacred, and believed of old,  
 That no success attends on spears and swords  
 Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's ?  
 That courage is his creature ; and dismay  
 The post, that at his bidding speeds away,  
 Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue  
 With doleful humour and sad presage hung,  
 To quell the valour of the stoutest heart,  
 And teach the combatant a woman's part ?  
 That he bids thousands fly when none pursue,  
 Saves as he will by many or by few,  
 And claims for ever, as his royal right,  
 Th' event and sure decision of the fight ?

Hast thou, though suckled at fair Freedom's breast,  
 Exported slavery to the conquered East?  
 Pulled down the tyrants India served with dread,  
 And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?  
 Gone thither armed and hungry, returned full,  
 Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul,  
 A despot big with power obtained by wealth,  
 And that obtained by rapine and by stealth?  
 With Asiatic vices stored thy mind,  
 But left their virtues and thine own behind?  
 And having trucked thy soul, brought home the fee  
 To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?

Hast thou by statute shoved from its design  
 The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine,  
 And made the symbols of atoning grace  
 An office-key, a picklock to a place,  
 That infidels may prove their title good  
 By an oath dipped in sacramental blood?  
 A blot that will be still a blot, in spite  
 Of all that grave apologists may write;  
 And though a bishop toil to cleanse the stain,  
 He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain.  
 And hast thou sworn on every slight pretence,  
 Till perjuries are common as bad pence,  
 While thousands, careless of the damning sin,  
 Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er looked within?

Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with dis-  
 grace,

And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face,  
 (For thou hast known eclipses, and endured  
 Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured,  
 When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow;  
 And never of a sabler hue than now,)  
 Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience seared,  
 Despising all rebuke, still persevered,

And having chosen evil, scorned the voice  
 That cried, Repent!—and gloried in thy choice?  
 Thy fastings, when calamity at last  
 Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast,  
 What mean they? Canst thou dream there is a power  
 In lighter diet at a later hour,  
 To charm to sleep the threatening of the skies,  
 And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes?  
 The fast that wins deliverance, and suspends  
 The stroke, that a vindictive God intends,  
 Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw  
 Thy life upon the pattern of the law;  
 To war with pleasure, idolized before;  
 To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke no more.  
 All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence,  
 Is wooing mercy by renewed offence.

Hast thou within the sin, that in old time  
 Brought fire from Heaven, the sex-abusing crime,  
 Whose horrid perpetration stamps disgrace  
 Baboons are free from, upon human race?  
 Think on the fruitful and well-watered spot,  
 That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot,  
 Where Paradise seemed still vouchsafed on earth,  
 Burning and scorched into perpetual dearth,  
 Or, in his words who damned the base desire,  
 Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:  
 Then nature injured, scandalized, defiled,  
 Unveiled her blushing cheek, looked on, and smiled;  
 Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced,  
 And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine,  
 And farther still the formed and fixed design,  
 To thrust the charge of deeds that I detest,  
 Against an innocent, unconscious breast:

The man that dares traduce, because he can  
 With safety to himself, is not a man :  
 An individual is a sacred mark,  
 Not to be pierced in play, or in the dark ;  
 But public censure speaks a public foe,  
 Unless a zeal for virtue guide the blow.

The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere,  
 From mean self-interest and ambition clear,  
 Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn,  
 Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn,  
 Their wisdom pure, and given them from above,  
 Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love,  
 As meek as the man Moses, and withal  
 As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul,  
 Should fly the World's contaminating touch,  
 Holy and unpolluted :—are thine such ?  
 Except a few with Eli's spirit blest,  
 Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest.  
 Where shall a teacher look in days like these,  
 For ears and hearts, that he can hope to please ?  
 Look to the poor—the simple and the plain—  
 Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain ;  
 Humility is gentle, apt to learn,  
 Speak but the word, will listen and return.  
 Alas, not so ! the poorest of the flock  
 Are proud, and set their faces as a rock ;  
 Denied that earthly opulence they choose,  
 God's better gift they scoff at and refuse.  
 The rich, the produce of a nobler stem,  
 Are more intelligent at least—try them.  
 O vain inquiry ! they without remorse  
 Are altogether gone a devious course ;  
 When beckoning Pleasure leads them, wildly stray ;  
 Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime,  
Review thy dim original and prime.  
This island, spot of unreclaimed rude earth,  
The cradle that received thee at thy birth,  
Was rocked by many a rough Norwegian blast,  
And Danish howlings scared thee as they passed ;  
For thou wast born amidst the din of arms,  
And sucked a breast that panted with alarms.  
While yet thou wast a grovelling puling chit,  
Thy bones not fashioned, and thy joints not knit,  
The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow,  
Though twice a Cæsar could not bend thee now.  
His victory was that of orient light,  
When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.  
Thy language at this distant moment shows  
How much the country to the conqueror owes ;  
Expressive, energetic, and refined,  
It sparkles with the gems he left behind :  
He brought thy land a blessing when he came,  
He found thee savage, and he left thee tame ;  
Taught thee to clothe thy pinked and painted hide.  
And grace thy figure with a soldier's pride ;  
He sowed the seeds of order where he went,  
Improved thee far beyond his own intent,  
And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone,  
Made thee at last a warrior like his own.  
Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,  
Needs only to be seen to be admired ;  
But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night,  
Was formed to harden hearts and shock the sight ;  
Thy Druids struck the well-hung harps they bore  
With fingers deeply died in human gore ;  
And, while the victim slowly bled to death,  
Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath.



Who brought the lamp, that with awaking beams  
Dispelled thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams,  
Tradition, now decrepid and worn out,  
Babbler of ancient fables, leaves a doubt :  
But still light reached thee ; and those gods of thine,  
Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,  
Fell broken and defaced at his own door,  
As Dagon in Philistia long before.  
But Rome, with sorceries and magic wand,  
Soon raised a cloud that darkened every land ;  
And thine was smothered in the stench and fog  
Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.  
Then priests, with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns,  
And griping fists, and unrelenting frowns,  
Legates and delegates with powers from hell,  
Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well :  
And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind,  
Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.\*  
Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack,  
Were trained beneath his lash, and knew the smack,  
And, when he laid them on the scent of blood,  
Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.  
Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb,  
That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome,  
They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies,  
His worthless absolution all the prize.  
Thou wast the veriest slave in days of yore,  
That ever dragged a chain or tugged an oar ;  
Thy monarchs, arbitrary, fierce, unjust,  
Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust,  
Disdained thy counsels, only in distress  
Found thee a goodly sponge for Power to press.

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\* Which may be found at Doctors' Commons.

Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee,  
 Provoked and harassed, in return plagued thee ;  
 Called thee away from peaceable employ,  
 Domestic happiness and rural joy,  
 To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down  
 In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.  
 Thy parliaments adored on bended knees  
 The sovereignty they were convened to please ;  
 Whate'er was asked, too timid to resist,  
 Complied with, and were graciously dismissed :  
 And if some Spartan soul a doubt expressed,  
 And, blushing at the tameness of the rest,  
 Dared to suppose the subject had a choice,  
 He was a traitor by the general voice.  
 Oh slave ! with powers thou didst not dare exert,  
 Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert ;  
 It shakes the sides of splenetic Disdain ;  
 Thou self-entitled ruler of the main,  
 To trace thee to the date when yon fair sea,  
 That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee ;  
 When other nations flew from coast to coast,  
 And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.  
 Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust ;  
 Blush, if thou canst ; not petrified, thou must :  
 Act but an honest and a faithful part ;  
 Compare what then thou wast, with what thou art ;  
 And God's disposing providence confessed,  
 Obduracy itself must yield the rest.—  
 Then art thou bound to serve him, and to prove,  
 Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love.

Has he not hid thee, and thy favoured land,  
 For ages safe beneath his sheltering hand,  
 Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof,  
 Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof,

And charged Hostility and Hate to roar  
Where else they would, but not upon thy shore ?  
His power secured thee when presumptuous Spain  
Baptized her fleet invincible in vain ;  
Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resigned  
To every pang that racks an anxious mind,  
Asked of the waves, that broke upon his coast,  
What tidings ? and the surge replied—All lost !  
And when the Stuart leaning on the Scot,  
Then too much feared, and now too much forgot,  
Pierced to the very centre of the realm,  
And hoped to seize his abdicated helm,  
'Twas but to prove how quickly with a frown  
He that had raised thee, could have plucked thee down.  
Peculiar is the grace by thee possessed,  
Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest ;  
Thy thunders travel over earth and seas,  
And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.  
'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm,  
Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm,  
While his own Heaven surveys the troubled scene,  
And feels no change, unshaken and serene.  
Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine,  
Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine ;  
Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays  
As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.  
True freedom is where no restraint is known,  
That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown ;  
Where only vice and injury are tied,  
And all from shore to shore is free beside.  
Such freedom is—and Windsor's hoary towers  
Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers,  
That won a nymph on that immortal plain,  
Like her the fabled Phœbus wooed in vain :

He found the laurel only—happier you  
The unfading laurel, and the virgin too !\*

Now think, if Pleasure have a thought to spare ;  
If God himself be not beneath her care ;  
If Business, constant as the wheels of time,  
Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme ;  
If the new mail thy merchants now receive,  
Or expectation of the next give leave ;  
Oh think ! if chargeable with deep arrears  
For such indulgence gilding all thy years,  
How much, though long neglected, shining yet,  
The beams of heavenly truth have swelled the debt.  
When persecuting zeal made royal sport  
With tortured innocence in Mary's court,  
And Bonner, blythe as shepherd at a wake,  
Enjoyed the show, and danced about the stake ;  
The sacred Book, its value understood,  
Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.  
Those holy men, so full of truth and grace,  
Seem to reflection of a different race ;  
Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere,  
In such a cause they could not dare to fear ;  
They could not purchase earth with such a prize,  
Or spare a life too short to reach the skies.  
From them to be conveyed along the tide,  
Their streaming hearts poured freely, when they died,  
Those truths, which neither use nor years impair,  
Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.  
What dotage will not vanity maintain ?  
What web too weak to catch a modern brain ?

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\* Alluding to the grant of Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede near Windsor.

The moles and bats in full assembly find,  
On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind.  
And did they dream, and art thou wiser now ?  
Prove it—if better, I submit and bow.  
Wisdom and Goodness are twin-born, one heart  
Must hold both sisters, never seen apart.  
So then—as darkness overspread the deep,  
Ere Nature rose from her eternal sleep,  
And this delightful earth, and that fair sky,  
Leaped out of nothing, called by the Most High ;  
By such a change thy darkness is made light,  
Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might ;  
And He, whose power mere nullity obeys,  
Who found thee nothing, formed thee for his praise.  
To praise him is to serve him, and fulfil,  
Doing and suffering, his unquestioned will ;  
'Tis to believe what men inspired of old,  
Faithful, and faithfully informed, unfold ;  
Candid and just, with no false aim in view,  
To take for truth what cannot but be true ;  
To learn in God's own school the Christian part,  
And bind the task assigned thee to thine heart :  
Happy the man there seeking and there found,  
Happy the nation where such men abound !

How shall a verse impress thee ? by what name  
Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame ?  
By theirs, whose bright example unimpeached  
Directs thee to that eminence they reached,  
Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires ?  
Or his, who touched their hearts with hallowed fires ?  
Their names alas ! in vain reproach an age,  
Whom all the vanities they scorned engage !  
And His, that seraphs tremble at, is hung  
Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue,

Or serves the champion in forensic war  
 To flourish and parade with at the bar.  
 Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea,  
 If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee ;  
 By every charm that smiles upon her face,  
 By joys possessed, and joys still held in chase,  
 If dear society be worth a thought,  
 And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not,  
 Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own,  
 Held by the tenure of his will alone,  
 Like angels in the service of their Lord,  
 Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word ;  
 That gratitude and temperance in our use  
 Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse,  
 Secure the favour, and enhance the joy,  
 That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.  
 But above all reflect, how cheap soe'er  
 Those rights that millions envy thee appear,  
 And, though resolved to risk them, and swim down  
 The tide of Pleasure, heedless of His frown,  
 That blessings truly sacred, and when given  
 Marked with the signature and stamp of Heaven,  
 The word of prophecy, those truths divine,  
 Which make that Heaven, if thou desire it, thine,  
 (Awful alternative ! believed, beloved,  
 Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved,)  
 Are never long vouchsafed, if pushed aside  
 With cold disgust or philosophic pride !  
 And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace,  
 Error, and darkness, occupy their place.

A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot  
 Not quickly found, if negligently sought,  
 Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small,  
 Endur'st the brunt, and dar'st defy them all :

And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise  
A bolder still, a contest with the skies?  
Remember, if He guard thee and secure,  
Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure;  
But if He leave thee, though the skill and power  
Of nations sworn to spoil thee and devour,  
Were all collected in thy single arm,  
And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm,  
That strength would fail, opposed against the push  
And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence  
Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence,)  
What nation amongst all thy foes is free  
From crimes as base as any charged on me?  
Their measure filled, they too shall pay the debt,  
Which God, though long forborne, will not forget.  
But know that Wrath divine, when most severe,  
Makes Justice still the guide of his career,  
And will not punish, in one mingled crowd,  
Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech,  
Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;  
And while at intervals a cold blast sings  
Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings,  
My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament  
A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.  
I know the warning song is sung in vain;  
That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain;  
But if a sweeter voice, and one designed  
A blessing to my country and mankind,  
Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home  
A flock so scattered, and so wont to roam,  
Then place it once again between my knees;  
The sound of truth will then be sure to please:

And truth alone, where'er my life be cast,  
In scenes of plenty or the pining waste,  
Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.



## HOPE.

—— doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.

VIRG. ÆN. vi. 109

ASK what is human life—the sage replies,  
With disappointment lowering in his eyes.  
A painful passage o'er a restless flood,  
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,  
A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,  
Closing at last in darkness and despair.  
The poor, inured to drudgery and distress,  
Act without aim, think little, and feel less,  
And nowhere, but in feigned Arcadian scenes,  
Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.  
Riches are passed away from hand to hand,  
As fortune, vice, or folly, may command ;  
As in a dance the pair that take the lead,  
Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed,  
So shifting and so various is the plan,  
By which Heaven rules the mixed affairs of man ;  
Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd,  
The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud ;  
Business is labour, and man's weakness such,  
Pleasure is labour too, and tires as much,  
The very sense of it foregoes its use,  
By repetition palled, by age obtuse.  
Youth lost in dissipation we deplore,  
Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore ;  
Our years, a fruitless race without a prize,  
Too many, yet too few to make us wise.

Dangling his cane about and taking snuff,  
 Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff—  
 O querulous and weak!—whose useless brain  
 Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain;  
 Whose eyes reverted weeps o'er all the past,  
 Whose prospect shows thee a disheartening waste;  
 Would age in thee resign his wintry reign,  
 And youth invigorate that frame again,  
 Renewed desire would grace with other speech  
 Joys always prized, when placed within our reach.

For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom  
 That overhangs the borders of thy tomb,  
 See Nature gay, as when she first began  
 With smiles alluring her admirer man;  
 She spreads the morning over eastern hills,  
 Earth glitters with the drops the night distils;  
 The Sun obedient at her call appears,  
 To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears;  
 Banks clothed with flowers, groves filled with sprightly  
 sounds,

Thy yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,  
 Streams edged with osiers, fattening every field,  
 Where'er they flow, now seen and now concealed;  
 From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet,  
 Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,  
 Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise,  
 Or Pride can look at with indifferent eyes,  
 All speak one language, all with one sweet voice  
 Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice!  
 Man feels the spur of passions and desires,  
 And she gives largely more than he requires;  
 Not that his hours devoted all to Care,  
 Hollow-eyed Abstinence, and lean Despair,  
 The wretch may pine, while to his smell, taste, sight,  
 She holds a paradise of rich delight;

But gently to rebuke his awkward fear,  
 To prove that what she gives, she gives sincere ;  
 To banish hesitation, and proclaim  
 His happiness, her dear, her only aim.  
 'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,  
 That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem,  
 That only shadows are dispensed below,  
 And Earth has no reality but woe.

Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue,  
 As youth or age persuades ; and neither true.

So Flora's wreath through coloured crystal seen,  
 The rose or lily appears blue or green,  
 But still the imputed tints are those alone  
 The medium represents, and not their own.

To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undressed,  
 To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best,  
 Till half the world comes rattling at his door,  
 To fill the dull vacuity till four ;  
 And, just when evening turns the blue vault gray  
 To spend two hours in dressing for the day ;  
 To make the sun a bauble without use,  
 Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce ;  
 Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought,  
 Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not ;  
 Through mere necessity to close his eyes  
 Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise ;  
 Is such a life, so tediously the same,  
 So void of all utility or aim,  
 That poor JONQUIL, with almost every breath  
 Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death :  
 For he, with all his follies, has a mind  
 Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind,  
 But now and then perhaps a feeble ray  
 Of distant wisdom shoots across his way,

By which he reads, that life without a plan,  
 As useless as the moment it began,  
 Serves merely as a soil for discontent  
 To thrive in ; an encumbrance ere half spent.  
 Oh weariness beyond what asses feel,  
 That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel ;  
 A dull rotation, never at a stay,  
 Yesterday's face twin-image of to-day ;  
 While conversation, an exhausted stock,  
 Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock.  
 No need, he cries, of gravity stuffed out  
 With academic dignity devout,  
 To read wise lectures, vanity the text :  
 Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next ;  
 For truth self-evident, with pomp impressed,  
 Is vanity surpassing all the rest.

That remedy, not hid in deeps profound,  
 Yet seldom sought where only to be found,  
 While passion turns aside from its due scope  
 The inquirer's aim, that remedy is hope.  
 Life is His gift, from whom whate'er life needs,  
 With every good and perfect gift, proceeds ;  
 Bestowed on man, like all that we partake,  
 Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake ;  
 Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour,  
 And yet the seed of an immortal flower ;  
 Designed in honour of his endless love,  
 To fill with fragrance his abode above ;  
 No trifle, howsoever short it seem,  
 And, howsoever shadowy, no dream ;  
 Its value, what no thought can ascertain,  
 Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.  
 Men deal with life as children with their play,  
 Who first misuse, then cast their toys away ;

Live to no sober purpose, and contend  
That their Creator had no serious end.  
When God and man stand opposite in view,  
Man's disappointment must of course ensue.  
The just Creator condescends to write,  
In beams of inextinguishable light,  
His names of wisdom, goodness, power, and love,  
On all that blooms below, or shines above ;  
To catch the wandering notice of mankind,  
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,  
His gracious attributes, and prove the share  
His offspring hold on his paternal care.  
If, led from earthly things to things divine,  
His creature thwart not his august design,  
Then praise is heard instead of reasoning pride,  
And captious cavil and complaint subside.  
Nature, employed in her allotted place,  
Is hand-maid to the purposes of Grace ;  
By good vouchsafed makes known superior good,  
And bliss not seen by blessings understood :  
That bliss, revealed in Scripture, with a glow  
Bright as the covenant-ensuring bow,  
Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn  
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all  
That men have deemed substantial since the fall,  
Yet has the wondrous virtue to educe  
From emptiness itself a real use ;  
And while she takes as at a father's hand,  
What health and sober appetite demand,  
From fading good derives, with chymic art,  
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart.  
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,  
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,

On steady wings sails through the immense abyss,  
 Plucks aramanthine joys from bowers of bliss,  
 And crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here,  
 With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.  
 Hope, as an anchor firm and sure, holds fast  
 The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.  
 Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure  
 His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.  
 Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,  
 Whom now despairing agonies destroy,  
 Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,  
 What treasures centre, what delights in thee.  
 Had he the gems, the spices, and the land  
 That boasts the treasure, all at his command;  
 The fragrant grove, the inestimable mine,  
 Were light, when weighed against one smile of thine.

Though clasped and cradled in his nurse's arms,  
 He shines with all a cherub's artless charms,  
 Man is the genuine offspring of revolt,  
 Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt;  
 His passions, like the watery stores that sleep  
 Beneath the smiling surface of the deep,  
 Wait but the lashes of a wintry storm,  
 To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form.  
 From infancy through childhood's giddy maze,  
 Froward at school, and fretful in his plays,  
 The puny tyrant burns to subjugate  
 The free republic of the whip-gig state.  
 If one, his equal in athletic frame,  
 Or, more provoking still, of nobler name,  
 Dare step across his arbitrary views,  
 An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues:  
 The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,  
 Till the best tongue, or heaviest hand prevails.

Now see him launched into the world at large ;  
 If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge,  
 Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl,  
 Though short, too long, the price he pays for all.  
 If lawyer, loud, whatever cause he plead,  
 But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.  
 Perhaps a grave physician gathering fees,  
 Punctually paid for lengthening out disease—  
 No COTTON, whose humanity sheds rays,  
 That make superior skill his second praise.  
 If arms engage him, he devotes to sport  
 His date of life, so likely to be short ;  
 A soldier may be any thing, if brave,  
 So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.  
 Such stuff the world is made of ; and mankind  
 To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resigned,  
 Insist on, as if each were his own pope,  
 Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope.  
 But Conscience, in some awful silent hour,  
 When captivating lusts have lost their power,  
 Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream,  
 Reminds him of religion, hated theme !  
 Starts from the down, on which she lately slept,  
 And tells of laws despised, at least not kept :  
 Shows with a pointing finger, but no noise,  
 A pale procession of past sinful joys,  
 All witnesses of blessings fully scorned,  
 And life abused, and not to be suborned.  
 Mark these, she says ; these summon'd from afar,  
 Begin their march to meet thee at the bar ;  
 There find a Judge inexorably just,  
 And perish there, as all presumption must.  
 Peace be to those (such peace as Earth can give)  
 Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live ;

Born capable indeed of heavenly truth ;  
But down to latest age, from earliest youth,  
Their mind a wilderness through want of care,  
The plough of wisdom never entering there.  
Peace (if insensibility may claim  
A right to the meek honours of her name)  
To men of pedigree, their noble race,  
Emulous always of the nearest place  
To any throne, except the throne of Grace.  
Let cottagers and unenlightened swains  
Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains ;  
Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer,  
And ask, and fancy they find blessings there.  
Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat  
To enjoy cool nature in a country seat,  
To exchange the centre of a thousand trades,  
For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades,  
May now and then their velvet cushions take,  
And seem to pray for good example sake ;  
Judging, in charity no doubt, the town  
Pious enough, and having need of none.  
Kind souls ! to teach their tenantry to prize  
What they themselves, without remorse despise :  
Nor hope have they, nor fear of ought to come,  
As well for them had prophecy been dumb ;  
They could have held the conduct they pursue,  
Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew ;  
And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they,  
Is a pearl cast—completely cast away.

They die.—Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport  
All the grim honours of his ghastly court.  
Far other paintings grace the chamber now,  
Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow :  
The busy heralds hang the sable scene  
With mournful scutcheons, and dim lamps between ;



Proclaim their titles to the crowd around,  
 But they that wore them move not at the sound;  
 The coronet, placed idly at their head,  
 Adds nothing now to the degraded dead;  
 And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier,  
 Can only say—Nobility lies here.  
 Peace to all such—'twere pity to offend,  
 By useless censure, whom we cannot mend;  
 Life without hope can close but in despair,  
 'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there.

As, when two pilgrims in a forest stray,  
 Both may be lost, yet each in his own way;  
 So fares it with the multitudes beguiled  
 In vain Opinion's waste and dangerous wild;  
 Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among,  
 Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong.  
 But here, alas! the fatal difference lies,  
 Each man's belief is right in his own eyes;  
 And he that blames what they have blindly chose,  
 Incurs resentment for the love he shows.

Say, Botanist, within whose province fall  
 The cedar and the hyssop on the wall,  
 Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers,  
 What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?  
 Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined,  
 Distinguish every cultivated kind;  
 The want of both denotes a meaner breed,  
 And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.  
 Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect  
 Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect,  
 If wild in nature, and not duly found,  
 Gethsemane! in thy dear hallowed ground,  
 That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light,  
 Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight,

Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds,  
 (Oh cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways,  
 Diverging each from each, like equal rays,  
 Himself as bountiful as April rains,  
 Lord paramount of the surrounding plains,  
 Would give relief of bed and board to none  
 But guests that sought it in the appointed ONE;  
 And they might enter at his open door,  
 E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.  
 He sent a servant forth by every road,  
 To sound his horn, and publish it abroad,  
 That all might mark—knight, menial, high and low,  
 An ordinance it concerned them much to know.  
 If, after all, some headstrong hardy lout  
 Would disobey, though sure to be shut out,  
 Could he with reason murmur at his case,  
 Himself sole author of his own disgrace?  
 No! the decree was just and without flaw;  
 And he that made, had right to make, the law;  
 His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrained,  
 The wrong was his who wrongfully complained.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife  
 With Him, the Donor of eternal life,  
 Because the deed, by which his love confirms  
 The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.  
 Compliance with his will your lot ensures,  
 Accept it only, and the boon is yours.  
 And sure it is as kind to smile and give,  
 As with a frown to say, Do this and live.  
 Love is not pedlar's trumpery bought and sold:  
 He *will* give freely, or he *will* withhold;  
 His soul abhors a mercenary thought,  
 And him as deeply who abhors it not:

He stipulates indeed, but merely this,  
 That man will freely take an unbought bliss,  
 Will trust him for a faithful generous part,  
 Not set a price upon a willing heart.  
 Of all the ways that seem to promise fair,  
 To place you where his saints his presence share,  
 This only can ; for this plain cause, expressed  
 In terms as plain, Himself hath shut the rest.  
 But oh the strife, the bickering and debate,  
 The tidings of unpurchased Heaven create !  
 The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss,  
 All speakers, yet all language at a loss.  
 From stuccoed walls smart arguments rebound,  
 And beaux, adept in every thing profound,  
 Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.  
 Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites,  
 The explosion of the levelled tube excites,  
 Where mouldering abbey-walls o'erhang the glade,  
 And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade ;  
 The screaming nations, hovering in mid air,  
 Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there,  
 And seem to warn him never to repeat  
 His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu, Vinosa cries, ere yet he sips  
 The purple bumper trembling at his lips,  
 Adieu to all morality ! if Grace  
 Make works a vain ingredient in the case.  
 The Christian hope is—Waiter, draw the cork—  
 If I mistake not—Blockhead ! with a fork !  
 Without good works, whatever some may boast,  
 Mere folly and delusion—Sir, your toast.  
 My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes,  
 That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes  
 With nice attention, in a righteous scale,  
 And save or damn as these or those prevail.

I plant my foot upon the ground of trust,  
 And silence every fear with—God is just.  
 But if perchance on some dull drizzling day  
 A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say,  
 If thus the important cause is to be tried,  
 Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side ;  
 I soon recover from these needless frights,  
 And God is merciful—sets all to rights.  
 Thus between justice, as my prime support,  
 And mercy, fled to as the last resort,  
 I glide and steal along with Heaven in view,  
 And—pardon me, the bottle stands with you.

I never will believe, the Colonel cries,  
 The sanguinary schemes that some devise,  
 Who make the good Creator on their plan  
 A being of less equity than man,  
 If appetite, or what divines call lust,  
 Which men comply with, e'en because they must,  
 Be punished with perdition, who is pure ?  
 Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.  
 If sentence of eternal pain belong  
 To every sudden slip and transient wrong,  
 Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail  
 A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail.  
 My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean  
 By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene)—  
 My creed is, he is safe that does his best,  
 And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.

Right, says an Ensign ; and, for aught I see,  
 Your faith and mine substantially agree ;  
 The best of every man's performance here  
 Is to discharge the duties of his sphere.  
 A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,  
 Honesty shines with great advantage there :

Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest,  
A decent caution and reserve at least.  
A soldier's best is courage in the field,  
With nothing here that wants to be concealed.  
Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay ;  
A hand as liberal as the light of day.  
The soldier thus endowed, who never shrinks,  
Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks,  
Who scorns to do an injury by stealth,  
Must go to Heaven—and I must drink his health.  
Sir Smug, he cries, (for lowest at the board,  
Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord,  
His shoulders, witnessing, by many a shrug,  
How much his feelings suffered, sat Sir Smug)  
Your office is to winnow false from true ;  
Come, prophet, drink, and tell us what think you ?

Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass,  
Which they that woo preferment rarely pass,  
Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies,  
Is still found fallible, however wise ;  
And differing judgments serve but to declare,  
That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where.  
Of all it ever was my lot to read,  
Of Critics now alive, or long since dead,  
The book of all the world that charmed me most  
Was—welladay ! the title-page was lost ;  
The writer well remarks, a heart that knows  
To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows,  
With prudence always ready at our call,  
To guide our use of it, is all in all.  
Doubtless it is—To which, of my own store,  
I superadd a few essentials more ;  
But these, excuse the liberty I take,  
I waive just now, for conversation's sake.—

Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim,  
And add Right Reverend to Smug's honoured name.

And yet our lot is given us in a land  
Where busy arts are never at a stand ;  
Where Science points her telescopic eye,  
Familiar with the wonders of the sky ;  
Where bold inquiry, diving out of sight,  
Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light :  
Where nought eludes the persevering quest  
That fashion, taste, or luxury, suggest.

But, above all, in her own light arrayed,  
See Mercy's grand apocalypse displayed !  
The sacred book no longer suffers wrong,  
Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue ;  
But speaks with plainness, art could never mend,  
What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.  
God gives the word, the preachers throng around,  
Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound :  
That sound bespeaks Salvation on her way,  
The trumpet of a life-restoring day ;  
'Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines,  
And in the gulf of her Cornubian mines.  
And still it spreads. See Germany send forth  
Her sons\* to pour it on the farthest north :  
Fired with a zeal peculiar, *they* defy  
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,  
And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose  
On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within the enclosure of your rocks,  
Nor herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks ;  
No fertilizing streams your fields divide,  
That show reversed the villas on their side ;

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\* The Moravian Missionaries in Greenland. See Krantz.

No groves have ye ; no cheerful sound of bird,  
 Or voice of turtle in your land is heard ;  
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell  
 Of those, that walk at evening where ye dwell :  
 But winter, armed with terrors here unknown,  
 Sits absolute on his unskaken throne ;  
 Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,  
 And bids the mountains he has built stand fast ;  
 Beckons the legions of his storms away  
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey ;  
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,  
 And scorns to share it with the distant sun.  
 Yet Truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle !  
 And Peace, the genuine offspring of her smile ;  
 The pride of lettered Ignorance, that binds  
 In chains of error our accomplished minds,  
 That decks, with all the splendour of the true  
 A false religion, is unknown to you.  
 Nature, indeed, vouchsafes for our delight  
 The sweet vicissitudes of day and night ;  
 Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer  
 Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here ;  
 But brighter beams than his who fires the skies,  
 Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,  
 That shoot into your darkest caves the day,  
 From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see the encouragement Grace gives to vice,  
 The dire effect of mercy without price !  
 What were they ? what some fools are made by art,  
 They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.  
 The gross idolatry blind heathens teach  
 Was too refined for them, beyond their reach.  
 Not e'en the glorious Sun, though men revere  
 The monarch most, that seldom will appear,

And though his beams, that quicken where they shine,  
 May claim some right to be esteemed divine,  
 Not even the sun, desirable as rare,  
 Could bend one knee, engage one votary there ;  
 They were, what base Credulity believes  
 True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves.  
 The full-gorged savage, at his nauseous feast,  
 Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,  
 Was one, whom Justice, on an equal plan,  
 Denouncing death upon the sins of man,  
 Might almost have indulged with an escape,  
 Chargeable only with a human shape.  
 What are they now ?—Morality may spare  
 Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there :  
 The wretch, who once sang wildly, danced, and laughed,  
 And sucked in dizzy madness with his draught,  
 Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways,  
 Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays ;  
 Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,  
 Abhors the craft he boasted of before,  
 And he that stole, has learned to steal no more.  
 Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing,  
 Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring,  
 And where unsightly and rank thistles grew,  
 Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand  
 On what foundation virtue is to stand,  
 If self-exalting claims be turned adrift,  
 And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift ;  
 The poor reclaimed inhabitant, his eyes  
 Glistening at once with pity and surprise,  
 Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight  
 Of one, whose birth was in a land of light,  
 Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,  
 And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.



These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied  
 The common care that waits on all beside,  
 Wild as if Nature there, void of all good,  
 Played only gambols in a frantic mood,  
 (Yet charge not heavenly skill with having planned  
 A plaything world, unworthy of his hand,)  
 Can see his love, though secret evil lurks  
 In all we touch, stamped plainly on his works,  
 Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,  
 Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.  
 Hard task, indeed, o'er arctic seas to roam !  
 Is hope is exotic? grows it not at home?  
 Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,  
 May press the eye too closely to be borne :  
 A distant virtue we can all confess,  
 It hurts our pride, and moves our envy less.

Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek  
 I slur a name a poet must not speak)  
 Stood pilloried on Infamy's high stage,  
 And bore the pelting scorn of half an age ;  
 The very butt of Slander, and the blot  
 For every dart that Malice ever shot.  
 The man that mentioned *him* at once dismissed  
 All mercy from his lips, and sneered and hissed ;  
 His crimes were such as Sodom never knew,  
 And perjury stood up to swear all true ;  
 His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence,  
 His speech rebellion against common sense ;  
 A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule,  
 And when by that of reason, a mere fool ;  
 The World's best comfort was, his doom was passed ;  
 Die when he might, he must be damned at last.

Now, Truth, perform thine office ; waft aside  
 The curtain drawn by Prejudice and pride,

Reveal (the man is dead) to wondering eyes  
 This more than monster, in his proper guise.  
 He loved the World that hated him : the tear  
 That dropped upon his Bible was sincere :  
 Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,  
 His only answer was a blameless life ;  
 And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,  
 Had each a brother's interest in his heart.  
 Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,  
 Were copied close in him, and well transcribed.  
 He followed Paul ; his zeal a kindred flame,  
 His apostolic charity the same.  
 Like him, crossed cheerfully tempestuous seas,  
 Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease.  
 Like him he laboured, and like him content  
 To bear it, suffered shame where'er he went.  
 Blush Calumny ! and write upon his tomb,  
 If honest Eulogy can spare thee room,  
 Thy deep repentance of thy thousand lies,  
 Which, aimed at him, have pierced the offended skies !  
 And say, Blot out my sin, confessed, deplored,  
 Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord !

No blinder bigot, I maintain it still,  
 Than he who must have pleasure, come what will :  
 He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw,  
 And deems her sharp artillery mere straw.  
 Scripture indeed is plain ; but God and he  
 On Scripture ground are sure to disagree ;  
 Some wiser rule must teach him how to live,  
 Than this his Maker has seen fit to give ;  
 Supple and flexible as Indian cane,  
 To take the bend his appetites ordain ;  
 Contrived to suit frail Nature's crazy case,  
 And reconcile his lusts with saving grace.

By this, with nice precision of design,  
 He draws upon life's map a zigzag line,  
 That shows how far 'tis safe to follow sin,  
 And where his danger and God's wrath begin.  
 By this he forms, as pleased he sports along,  
 His well-poised estimate of right and wrong ;  
 And finds the modish manners of the day,  
 Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan Caprice decrees,  
 With what materials, on what ground you please ;  
 Your hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired,  
 If not that hope the Scripture has required.  
 The strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams,  
 With which hypocrisy for ever teems,  
 (Though other follies strike the public eye,  
 And raise a laugh,) pass unmolested by ;  
 But if, unblameable in word and thought,  
 A *man* arise, a man whom God has taught,  
 With all Elijah's dignity of tone,  
 And all the love of the beloved John,  
 To storm the citadels they build in air,  
 And smite the untempered wall ; 'tis death to spare.  
 To sweep away all refuges of lies,  
 And place, instead of quirks themselves devise,  
 LAMA SABACTHANI before their eyes ;  
 To prove, that without Christ all gain is loss,  
 All hope despair, that stands not on his cross ;  
 Except the few his God may have impressed,  
 A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least,  
 There dwells a consciousness in every breast,  
 That folly ends where genuine hope begins,  
 And he that finds his Heaven must lose his sins.

Nature opposes with her utmost force  
 This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce ;  
 And, while religion seems to be her view,  
 Hates with a deep sincerity *the true* :  
 For this, of all that ever influenced man,  
 Since Abel worshipped, or the world began,  
 This only spares no lust, admits no plea,  
 But makes him, if at all, completely free ;  
 Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car,  
 Of an eternal, universal war ;  
 Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles,  
 Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles ;  
 Drives through the realms of Sin, where Riot reels,  
 And grinds his crown beneath her burning wheels !  
 Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art,  
 Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,  
 Insensible of Truth's almighty charms,  
 Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms !  
 While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears,  
 His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears,  
 Mighty to parry and push by God's word  
 With senseless noise, his argument the sword,  
 Pretends a zeal for godliness and grace,  
 And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth ! make known  
 Thy deathless wreaths, and triumphs all thine own :  
 The silent progress of thy power is such,  
 Thy means so feeble, and despised so much,  
 That few believe the wonders thou hast wrought,  
 And none can teach them, but whom thou hast taught.  
 O see me sworn to serve thee, and command  
 A painter's skill into a poet's hand,  
 That, while I trembling trace a work divine,

Fancy may stand aloof from the design,  
And light, and shade, and every stroke, be thine.  
If ever thou hast felt another's pain,  
If ever when he sighed hast sighed again,  
If ever on thy eyelid stood the tear,  
That pity had engendered, drop one here.  
This man was happy—had the World's good word,  
And with it every joy it can afford ;  
Friendship and love seemed tenderly at strife,  
Which most should sweeten his untroubled life ;  
Politely learned, and of a gentle race,  
Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace,  
And whether at the toilette of the fair  
He laughed and trifled, made him welcome there,  
Or if in masculine debate he shared,  
Ensured him mute attention and regard.  
Alas, how changed ! Expressive of his mind,  
His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined ;  
Those awful syllables, Hell, death, and sin,  
Though whispered, plainly tell what works within ;  
That Conscience there performs her proper part,  
And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart ;  
Forsaking, and forsaken of all friends,  
He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends.  
Hard task ! for one who lately knew no care,  
And harder still as learnt beneath despair ;  
His hours no longer pass unmarked away,  
A dark importance saddens every day ;  
He hears the notice of the clock perplexed,  
And cries, Perhaps Eternity strikes next ;  
Sweet music is no longer music here,  
And laughter sounds like madness in his ear :  
His grief the World of all her power disarms,  
Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms :

God's Holy word, once trivial in his view,  
 Now by the voice of his experience true,  
 Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone  
 Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.  
 Now let the bright reverse be known abroad,  
 Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God.

As when a felon, whom his country's laws  
 Have justly doomed for some atrocious cause,  
 Expects in darkness and heart chilling fears,  
 The shameful close of all his mispent years ;  
 If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,  
 A tempest usher in the dreadful morn,  
 Upon his dungeon-walls the lightning play,  
 The thunder seems to summon him away,  
 The warder at the door his key applies,  
 Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies ;  
 If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,  
 When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,  
 The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,  
 He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;  
 A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,  
 And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.  
 Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs  
 The comfort of a few poor added days,  
 Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul  
 Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.  
 'Tis Heaven, all Heaven descending on the wings  
 Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;  
 'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part,  
 'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.  
 O welcome now the Sun's once hated light,  
 His noonday beams were never half so bright.  
 Not kindred minds alone are called t' employ  
 Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy ;

Unconscious nature, all that he surveys,  
Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth,  
The scoff of withered age, and beardless youth ;  
These move the censure and illiberal grin  
Of fools, that hate thee and delight in sin ;  
But these shall last when night has quenched the pole,  
And Heaven is all departed as a scroll.  
And when, as justice has long since decreed,  
This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed,  
Then these thy glorious works, and they who share  
That hope, which can alone exclude despair,  
Shall live exempt from weakness and decay,  
The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the bard, (if that fair name belong  
To him, that blends no fable with his song)  
Whose lines uniting, by an honest art,  
The faithful monitor's and poet's part,  
Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind,  
And, while they captivate, inform the mind :  
Still happier, if he till a thankful soil,  
And fruit reward his honourable toil :  
But happier far, who comfort those that wait  
To hear plain truth at Judah's hallowed gate :  
Their language simple, as their manners meek,  
No shining ornaments have they to seek,  
Nor labour they, nor time nor talents waste,  
In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste ;  
But while they speak the wisdom of the skies,  
Which art can only darken and disguise,  
The abundant harvest, recompense divine,  
Repays their work—the gleanings only mine.

## CHARITY.

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Quo nihil majus meliusve terris  
Fata donavere, bonique divi ;  
Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum  
Tempora priscum.

HOR. Lib. iv. Od. 2.

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FAIREST and foremost of the train that wait  
On man's most dignified and happiest state,  
Whether we name thee Charity or Love,  
Chief grace below, and all in all above,  
Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea)  
A task I venture on, impelled by thee :  
O never seen but in thy blest effects,  
Or felt but in the soul that Heaven selects ;  
Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known  
To other hearts, must have thee in his own.  
Come, prompt me with benevolent desires,  
Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires,  
And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem  
A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan,  
By various ties attaches man to man :  
He made, at first, though free and unconfined,  
One man the common father of the kind ;  
That every tribe, though placed as he sees best,  
Where seas or deserts part them from the rest,  
Differing in language, manners, or in face,  
Might feel themselves allied to all the race.  
When Cook—lamented, and with tears as just  
As ever mingled with heroic dust—



Steered Britain's oak into a world unknown,  
 And in his country's glory sought his own,  
 Wherever he found man, to nature true,  
 The rights of man were sacred in his view ;  
 He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile,  
 The simple native of the new-found isle ;  
 He spurned the wretch, that slighted or withstood  
 The tender argument of kindred blood,  
 Nor would endure, that any should control  
 His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But though some nobler minds a law respect,  
 That none shall with impunity neglect,  
 In baser souls unnumbered evils meet,  
 To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.  
 While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved,  
 See Cortez odious for a world enslaved !  
 Where wast thou then, sweet Charity ? where then,  
 Thou tutelary friend of helpless men ?  
 Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found,  
 Or building hospitals on English ground ?  
 No.—Mammon makes the World his legatee  
 Through fear, not love ; and Heaven abhors the fee.  
 Wherever found, (and all men need thy care,)  
 Nor age nor infancy could find thee there.  
 The hand, that slew till it could slay no more,  
 Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore.  
 Their prince, as justly seated on his throne  
 As vain imperial Philip on his own,  
 Tricked out of all his royalty by art,  
 That stripped him bare, and broke his honest heart,  
 Died by the sentence of a shaven priest,  
 For scorning what they taught him to detest.  
 How dark the veil, that intercepts the blaze  
 Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways ;

God stood not, though he seemed to stand, aloof;  
 And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof:  
 The wreath he won drew down an instant curse,  
 The fretting plague is in the public purse,  
 The cankered spoil corrodes the pining state,  
 Starved by that indolence their minds create.

Oh could their ancient Incas rise again,  
 How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!  
 Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see  
 The robber and the murderer weak as we?  
 Thou, that hast wasted Earth, and dared despise  
 Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,  
 Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid  
 Low in the pits thine avarice has made.  
 We come with joy from our eternal rest,  
 To see the oppressor in his turn oppressed.  
 Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand,  
 Rolled over all our desolated land,  
 Shook principalities and kingdoms down,  
 And made the mountains tremble at his frown?  
 The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,  
 And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.  
 'Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,  
 And Vengeance executes what Justice wills.

Again—the band of commerce was designed  
 To associate all the branches of mankind;  
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,  
 Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.  
 Wise to promote whatever end he means,  
 God opens fruitful nature's various scenes:  
 Each climate needs what other climes produce,  
 And offers something to the general use;  
 No land but listens to the common call,  
 And in return receives supply from all.

This genial intercourse, and mutual aid,  
Cheers what were else a universal shade,  
Calls Nature from her ivy-mantled den,  
And softens human rock-work into men.  
Ingenious Art, with her expressive face,  
Steps forth to fashion and refine the race :  
Not only fills Necessity's demand,  
But overcharges her capacious hand :  
Capricious Taste itself can crave no more,  
Than she supplies from her abounding store ;  
She strikes out all that luxury can ask,  
And gains new vigour at her endless task.  
Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire,  
The painter's pencil and the poet's lyre ;  
From her the canvass borrows light and shade,  
And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.  
She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys,  
Gives difficulty all the grace of ease,  
And pours a torrent of sweet notes around,  
Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of Art, and Art thrives most  
Where commerce has enriched the busy coast ;  
He catches all improvements in his flight,  
Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight,  
Imports what others have invented well,  
And stirs his own to match them, or excel.  
'Tis thus reciprocating, each with each,  
Alternately the nations learn and teach ;  
While Providence enjoins to every soul  
A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heaven speed the canvass, gallantly unfurled  
To furnish and accommodate a world,  
To give the pole the produce of the sun,  
And knit the unsocial climates into one.—

Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave  
 Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save,  
 To succour wasted regions, and replace  
 The smile of Opulence in Sorrow's face.—  
 Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen,  
 Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene,  
 Charged with a freight transcending in its worth  
 The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth,  
 That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands,  
 A herald of God's love to pagan lands.  
 But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer,  
 For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,  
 Who drive a loathsome traffic, guage and span,  
 And buy the muscles and the bones of man!  
 The tender ties of father, husband, friend,  
 All bonds of nature in that moment end;  
 And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,  
 A stroke as fatal as the scythe of Death.  
 The sable warrior, frantic with regret  
 Of her he loves, and never can forget,  
 Loses in tears the far-receding shore,  
 But not the thought, that they must meet no more:  
 Deprived of her and freedom at a blow,  
 What has he left, that he can yet forego?  
 Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resigned,  
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind;  
 Puts off his generous nature; and, to suit  
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.  
 O most degrading of all ills that wait  
 On man, a mourner in his best estate!  
 All other sorrows Virtue may endure,  
 And find submission more than half a cure;  
 Grief is itself a medicine, and bestowed  
 To improve the fortitude that bears the load,

To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase,  
 The path of Wisdom, all whose paths are peace—  
 But slavery ! Virtue dreads it as her grave ;  
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave ;  
 Or if the will and sovereignty of God  
 Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,  
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,  
 And snap the chain the moment when you may.  
 Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,  
 That has a heart and life in it, Be free :  
 The beasts are chartered—neither age nor force  
 Can quell the love of freedom in a horse :  
 He breaks the cord that held him at the rack ;  
 And, conscious of an unencumbered back,  
 Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein ;  
 Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane ;  
 Responsive to the distant neigh he neighs ;  
 Nor stops till, overleaping all delays,  
 He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honoured with a Christian name  
 Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame ;  
 Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead  
 Expedience as a warrant for the deed ?  
 So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold,  
 To quit the forest and invade the fold :  
 So may the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,  
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bed-side :  
 Not he, but his emergence forced the door,  
 He found it inconvenient to be poor.  
 Has God then given its sweetness to the cane,  
 Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain ?  
 Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,  
 Unless his right to rule it be dismissed ?  
 Impudent blasphemy ! So Folly pleads,  
 And, Avarice being judge, with ease succeeds.

But grant the plea, and let it stand for just,  
 That man make man his prey, because he *must*;  
 Still there is room for pity to abate,  
 And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state.  
 A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,  
 The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought,  
 That souls have no discriminating hue,  
 Alike important in their Maker's view;  
 That none are free from blemish since the fall,  
 And Love divine has paid one price for all.  
 The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,  
 Has one that notices his silent grief.  
 He, from whose hands alone all power proceeds,  
 Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,  
 Considers *all* injustice with a frown;  
 But marks the man that treads his fellow down.  
 Begone—the whip and bell in that hard hand  
 Are hateful ensigns of usurped command,  
 Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim  
 To scourge him, weariness his only blame.  
 Remember Heaven has an avenging rod;  
 To smite the poor is treason against God.

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brooked,  
 While life's sublimest joys are overlooked:  
 We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil,  
 Murmuring and weary of our daily toil,  
 Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offered shade,  
 Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade:  
 Else who would lose, that had the power to improve,  
 The occasion of transmuting fear to love?  
 O 'tis a godlike privilege to save,  
 And he that scorns it is himself a slave.  
 Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day  
 Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.

"Beauty for ashes" is a gift indeed,  
 And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.  
 Then would he say, submissive at thy feet,  
 While gratitude and love made service sweet,—  
 My dear deliverer out of hopeless night,  
 Whose bounty bought me but to give me light,  
 I was a bondman on my native plain,  
 Sin forged, and Ignorance made fast, the chain ;  
 Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew,  
 Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue—  
 Farewell my former joys ! I sigh no more  
 For Africa's once loved, benighted shore ;  
 Serving a benefactor I am free ;  
 At my best home, if not exiled from thee.

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds  
 A stream of liberal and heroic deeds ;  
 The swell of pity not to be confined  
 Within the scanty limits of the mind,  
 Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,  
 A rich deposite, on the bordering lands :  
 These have an ear for his paternal call,  
 Who makes some rich for the supply of all ;  
 God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ ;  
 And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.

O could I worship aught beneath the skies,  
 That earth has seen, or fancy can devise,  
 Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand,  
 Built by no mercenary vulgar hand,  
 With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair  
 As ever dressed a bank, or scented summer air  
 Duly, as ever on the mountain's height  
 The peep of Morning shed a dawning light,  
 Again, when Evening, in her sober vest,  
 Drew the gay curtain of the fading west,

My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise,  
 For the chief blessings of my fairest days :  
 But that were sacrilege—praise is not thine,  
 But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine :  
 Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly  
 A captive bird into the boundless sky,  
 This triple realm adores thee—thou art come  
 From Sparta hither, and art here at home.  
 We feel thy force still active, at this hour  
 Enjoy immunity from priestly power,  
 While Conscience happier than in ancient years,  
 Owns no superior but the God she fears.  
 Propitious spirit ! yet expunge a wrong  
 Thy rights have suffered, and our land, too long.  
 Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share  
 The fears and hopes of a commercial care.  
 Prisons expect the wicked, and were built  
 To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt ;  
 But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood,  
 Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood :  
 And honest Merit stands on slippery ground,  
 Where covert guile and artifice abound.  
 Let just Restraint, for public peace designed,  
 Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind ;  
 The foe of virtue has no claim to thee,  
 But let insolvent Innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men,  
 Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen ;  
 Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed,  
 Should be the guerdon of a noble deed—  
 I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame  
 (Charity chosen as my theme and aim)  
 I must incur, forgetting HOWARD'S name.  
 Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign  
 Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine,



To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow,  
To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe,  
To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home,  
Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome,  
But knowledge such as only dungeons teach,  
And only sympathy like thine could reach ;  
That grief sequestered from the public stage,  
Might smooth her feathers and enjoy her cage ;  
Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal,  
The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.  
O that the voice of clamour and debate,  
That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state,  
Where hushed in favour of thy generous plea,  
The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee !  
Philosophy, that does not dream or stray,  
Walks arm in arm with Nature all his way ;  
Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends  
Whatever steep Inquiry recommends ;  
Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll  
Round other systems under her control ;  
Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light,  
That cheers the silent journey of the night,  
And brings at his return a bosom charged  
With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged.  
The treasured sweets of the capacious plan,  
That Heaven spreads wide before the view of man,  
All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue  
Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new :  
He too has a connecting power, and draws  
Man to the centre of the common cause,  
Aiding a dubious and deficient sight  
With a new medium and a purer light.  
All truth is precious, if not all divine ;  
And what dilates the powers must needs refine.

He reads the skies, and, watching every change,  
Provides the faculties an ampler range ;  
And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail,  
A prouder station on the general scale.  
But Reason still, unless divinely taught,  
Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought :  
The lamp of revelation only shows,  
What human wisdom cannot but oppose,  
That man, in nature's richest mantle clad,  
And graced with all philosophy can add,  
Though fair without, and luminous within,  
Is still the progeny and heir of sin.  
Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride :  
He feels his need of an unerring guide,  
And knows that falling he shall rise no more,  
Unless the power that bade him stand restore.  
This is indeed philosophy ; this known  
Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own ;  
And, without this, whatever he discuss ;  
Whether the space between the stars and us ;  
Whether he measure Earth, compute the sea ;  
Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea ;  
The solemn trifler with his boasted skill  
Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still :  
Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes  
Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.  
Self-knowledge truly learned of course implies  
The rich possession of a nobler prize ;  
For self to self, and God to man revealed,  
(Two themes to Nature's eye for ever sealed)  
Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace  
From the same centre of enlightening grace.  
Here stay thy foot ; how copious and how clear,  
The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here !

Hark ! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,  
 Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills,  
 Winding a secret or an open course,  
 And all supplied from an eternal source.  
 The ties of Nature do but feebly bind ;  
 And Commerce partially reclaims mankind :  
 Philosophy, without his heavenly guide,  
 May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride ;  
 But, while his promise is the reasoning part,  
 Has still a veil of midnight on his heart :  
 'Tis Truth divine, exhibited on earth,  
 Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy flows,  
 What will not argument sometimes suppose ?)  
 An isle possessed by creatures of our kind,  
 Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.  
 Let Supposition lend her aid once more,  
 And land some grave optician on the shore :  
 He claps his lens, if haply they may see,  
 Close to the part where vision ought to be ;  
 But finds, that, though his tubes assist his sight,  
 They cannot give it, or make darkness light.  
 He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud  
 A sense they know not, to the wondering crowd ;  
 He talks of light and the prismatic hues,  
 As men of depth in erudition use ;  
 But all he gains for his harangue is—Well,—  
 What monstrous lies some travellers will tell !

The soul, whose sight all-quickenning grace renews,  
 Takes the resemblance of the good she views,  
 As diamonds, stripped of their opaque disguise,  
 Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.  
 She speaks of him, her author, guardian, friend,  
 Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end,

In language warm as all that love inspires,  
And in the glow of her intense desires,  
Pants to communicate her noble fires.  
She sees a world stark blind to what employs  
Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys ;  
Though Wisdom hail them, heedless of her call,  
Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all :  
Herself as weak as her support is strong,  
She feels that frailty she denied so long ;  
And from a knowledge of her own disease,  
Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.  
Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,  
The reign of genuine Charity commence.  
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,  
She still is kind, and still she perseveres ;  
The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme,  
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream.  
The danger they discern not, they deny ;  
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.  
But still a soul thus touched can never cease,  
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.  
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,  
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child :  
She makes excuses where she might condemn,  
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them ;  
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast,  
The worst suggested, she believes the best ;  
Not soon provoked, however stung and teased,  
And if perhaps made angry, soon appeased ;  
She rather waives than will dispute her right,  
And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.  
Such was the portrait an apostle drew,  
The bright original was one he knew ;  
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true.

When one that holds communion with the skies,  
 Has filled his urn where these pure waters rise,  
 And once more mingles with us meaner things,  
 'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings ;  
 Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,  
 That tells us whence his treasures are supplied.  
 So when a ship, well freighted with the stores  
 The sun matures on India's spicy shores,  
 Has dropped her anchor, and her canvass furled,  
 In some safe haven of our western world,  
 'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went,  
 The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek when queasy conscience has its qualms,  
 To lull the painful malady with alms ;  
 But charity not feigned intends alone  
 Another's good—theirs centres in their own ;  
 And, too short lived to reach the realms of peace,  
 Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.  
 Flavia, most tender of her own good name,  
 Is rather careless of her sister's fame :  
 Her superfluity the poor supplies,  
 But, if she touch a character it dies.  
 The seeming virtue weighed against the vice,  
 She deems all safe, for she has paid the price :  
 No charity but alms aught values she,  
 Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.  
 How many deeds, with which the world has rung,  
 From Pride, in league with Ignorance, have sprung !  
 But God o'errules all human follies still,  
 And bends the tough materials to his will.  
 A conflagration, or a wintry flood,  
 Has left some hundreds without home or food ,  
 Extravagance and Avarice shall subscribe,  
 While fame and self-complacence are the bribe.

The brief proclaimed, it visits every pew,  
 But first the squire's, a compliment but due :  
 With slow deliberation he unties  
 His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes,  
 And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm,  
 Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm ;  
 Till finding, what he might have found before,  
 A smaller piece amidst the precious store,  
 Pinched close between his finger and his thumb,  
 He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.  
 Gold to be sure !—Throughout the town 'tis told,  
 How the good squire gives never less than gold.  
 From motives such as his, though not the best,  
 Springs in due time supply for the distressed ;  
 Not less effectual than what love bestows,  
 Except that office clips it as it goes.

But lest I seem to sin against a friend,  
 And wound the grace I mean to recommend,  
 (Though vice derided with a just design  
 Implies no tresspass against love divine)  
 Once more I would adopt the graver style ;  
 A teacher should be sparing of his smile.  
 Unless a love of virtue light the flame,  
 Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame !  
 He hides behind a magisterial air  
 His own offences, and strips others bare ;  
 Affects indeed a most humane concern,  
 That men, if gently tutored, will not learn ;  
 That mulish Folly, not to be reclaimed  
 By softer methods, must be made ashamed ;  
 But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean)  
 Too often rails to gratify his spleen.  
 Most satirists are indeed a public scourge ;  
 Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge ;

Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirred,  
 The milk of their good purpose all to curd.  
 Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse,  
 By lean despair upon an empty purse,  
 The wild assassins start into the street,  
 Prepared to poniard whomsoe'er they meet  
 No skill in swordmanship, however just,  
 Can be secure against a madman's thrust;  
 And even Virtue, so unfairly matched,  
 Although immortal, may be pricked or scratched.  
 When Scandal has new minted an old lie,  
 Or taxed invention for a fresh supply,  
 'Tis called a satire, and the world appears  
 Gathering around it with erected ears :  
 A thousand names are tossed into the crowd ;  
 Some whispered softly, and some twanged aloud ;  
 Just as the sapience of an author's brain  
 Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.  
 Strange ! how the frequent interjected dash  
 Quickens a market, and helps off the trash ;  
 The important letters that include the rest,  
 Serve as a key to those that are suppressed ;  
 Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw,  
 The world is charmed, and Scrib escapes the law.  
 So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail,  
 Worms may be caught by either head or tail ;  
 Forcibly drawn from many a close recess,  
 They meet with little pity, no redress ;  
 Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud,  
 Food for the famished rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence  
 To peace and charity, is mere pretence :  
 A bold remark, but which, if well applied,  
 Would humble many a towering poet's pride.

Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit,  
 And had no other play-place for his wit ;  
 Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame,  
 He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame ;  
 Perhaps—whatever end he might pursue,  
 The cause of virtue could not be his view.  
 At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes ;  
 The turns are quick, the polished points surprise,  
 But shine with cruel and tremendous charms,  
 That, while they please, possess us with alarms :  
 So have I seen (and hastened to the sight  
 On all the wings of holiday delight)  
 Where stands that monument of ancient power,  
 Named, with emphatic dignity, the Tower,  
 Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small,  
 In starry forms disposed upon the wall ;  
 We wonder, as we gazing stand below,  
 That brass and steel should make so fine a show ;  
 But though we praise the exact designer's skill,  
 Account them implements of mischief still.

No works shall find acceptance in that day,  
 When all disguises shall be rent away,  
 That square not truly with the Scripture plan,  
 Nor spring from love to God, or love to man.  
 As he ordains things sordid in their birth  
 To be resolved into their parent earth ;  
 And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs,  
 Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs ;  
 So self starts nothing, but what tends apace  
 Home to the goal, where it began the race.  
 Such as our motive is, our aim must be ;  
 If this be servile, that can ne'er be free ;  
 If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,  
 We glorify that self, not Him we ought :



Such virtues had need prove their own reward,  
The Judge of all men owes them no regard.  
True Charity, a plant divinely nursed,  
Fed by the love from which it rose at first,  
Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene,  
Storms but enliven its unfading green :  
Exuberant is the shadow it supplies,  
Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies.  
To look at Him, who formed us and redeemed,  
So glorious now, though once so disesteemed,  
To see a God stretch forth his human hand,  
To uphold the boundless scenes of his command ;  
To recollect, that, in a form like ours,  
He bruised beneath his feet the infernal powers,  
Captivity led captive, rose to claim  
The wreath he won so dearly in our name ;  
That, throned above all height, he condescends  
To call the few that trust in him his friends ;  
That in the Heaven of heavens, that space he deems  
Too scanty for the exertion of his beams,  
And shines, as if impatient to bestow  
Life and a kingdom upon worms below—  
That sight imparts a never-dying flame,  
Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.  
Like him the soul, thus kindled from above,  
Spreads wide her arms of universal love ;  
And, still enlarged as she receives the grace,  
Includes creation in her close embrace,  
Behold a Christian ! and without the fires  
The founder of that name alone inspires,  
Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet,  
To make the shining prodigy complete,  
Whoever boasts that name—behold a cheat !

Were love, in these the world's last doting years,  
 As frequent as the want of it appears,  
 The churches warmed, they would no longer hold  
 Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold ;  
 Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease ;  
 And e'en the dipped and sprinkled live in peace :  
 Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,  
 And flow in free communion with the rest.  
 The statesman, skilled in projects dark and deep,  
 Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep ;  
 His budget often filled, yet always poor,  
 Might swing at ease behind his study door.  
 No longer prey upon our annual rents,  
 Or scare the nation with its big contents :  
 Disbanded legions freely might depart,  
 And slaying man would cease to be an art.  
 No learned disputants would take the field,  
 Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield ;  
 Both sides deceived, if rightly understood,  
 Pelting each other for the public good.  
 Did charity prevail, the press would prove  
 A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love ;  
 And I might spare myself the pains to show  
 What few can learn, and all suppose they know.

Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay  
 With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray,  
 In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost,  
 The attention Pleasure has so much engrossed.  
 But if, unhappily deceived, I dream,  
 And prove too weak for so divine a theme,  
 Let Charity forgive me a mistake,  
 That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make,  
 And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

## CONVERSATION.

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Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,  
Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ  
Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles.

VIRG. Ecl. 5.

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THOUGH nature weigh our talents, and dispense  
To every man his modicum of sense,  
And Conversation in its better part  
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art,  
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,  
On culture, and the sowing of the soil.  
Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,  
But talking is not always to converse :  
Not more distinct from harmony divine,  
The constant creaking of a country sign.  
As Alphabets in ivory employ,  
Hour after hour, the yet unlettered boy,  
Sorting and puzzling with a deal of glee  
Those seeds of science called his A B C ;  
So language in the mouths of the adult,  
Witness its insignificant result,  
Too often proves an implement of play,  
A toy to sport with, and pass time away.  
Collect at evening what the day brought forth,  
Compress the sum into its solid worth,  
And if it weigh the importance of a fly,  
The scales are false, or algebra a lie.  
Sacred interpreter of human thought,  
How few respect or use thee as they ought !

But all shall give account of every wrong,  
 Who dare dishonour or defile the tongue ;  
 Who prostitute it in the cause of vice,  
 Or sell their glory at a market-price :  
 Who vote for hire, or point it with lampoon,  
 The dear-bought placeman, and the cheap buffoon.

There is a prurience in the speech of some,  
 Wrath stays him, or else God would strike them dumb :  
 His wise forbearance has their end in view,  
 They fill their measure, and receive their due.  
 The heathen law-givers of ancient days,  
 Names almost worthy of a Christian's praise,  
 Would drive them forth from the resort of men,  
 And shut up every satyr in his den.

O come not ye near innocence and truth,  
 Ye worms that eat into the bud of youth !  
 Infectious as impure, your blighting power  
 Taints in its rudiments the promised flower .  
 Its odour perished and its charming hue,  
 Thenceforth 'tis hateful, for it smells of you.  
 Not e'en the vigorous and headlong rage  
 Of adolescence, or a firmer age,  
 Affords a plea allowable or just  
 For making speech the pamperer of lust ;  
 But when the breath of age commits the fault,  
 'Tis nauseous as the vapour of a vault.  
 So withered stumps disgrace the sylvan scene,  
 No longer fruitful, and no longer green ;  
 The sapless wood, divested of the bark,  
 Grows fungous, and takes fire at every spark.

Oaths terminate, as Paul observes, all strife—  
 Some men have surely then a peaceful life ;  
 Whatever subject occupy discourse,  
 The feats of Vestris, or the naval force.

Asseveration blustering in your face  
 Makes contradiction such a hopeless case :  
 In every tale they tell, or false or true,  
 Well known, or such as no man ever knew,  
 They fix attention, heedless of your pain,  
 With oaths like rivets forced into the brain ;  
 And e'en when sober truth prevails throughout,  
 They swear it, till affirmance breeds a doubt.—  
 A Persian, humble servant of the sun,  
 Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,  
 Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,  
 With adjurations every word impress,  
 Supposed the man a bishop, or, at least,  
 God's name so much upon his lips, a priest ;  
 Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs,  
 And begged an interest in his frequent prayers.

Go, quit the rank to which ye stood preferred,  
 Henceforth associate in one common herd ;  
 Religion, virtue, reason, common sense,  
 Pronounce your human form a false pretence :  
 A mere disguise, in which a devil lurks,  
 Who yet betrays his secret by his works.

Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,  
 And make colloquial happiness your care,  
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,  
 A duel in the form of a debate.

The clash of arguments and jar of words,  
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,  
 Decide no question with their tedious length,  
 For opposition gives opinion strength,  
 Divert the champions prodigal of breath,  
 And put the peaceably-disposed to death.  
 O thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,  
 Nor carp at every flaw you may discern ;

Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,  
 I am not surely always in the wrong ;  
 'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,  
 A fool must now and then be right by chance.  
 Not that all freedom of dissent I blame ;  
 No—there I grant the privilege I claim.  
 A disputable point is no man's ground ;  
 Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.  
 Discourse may want an animated—No,  
 To brush the surface, and to make it flow ;  
 But still remember, if you mean to please,  
 To press your point with modesty and ease.  
 The mark, at which my juster aim I take,  
 Is contradiction for its own dear sake.  
 Set your opinion at whatever pitch,  
 Knots and impediments make something hitch ;  
 Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,  
 Your thread of argument is snapped again ;  
 The wrangler, rather than accord with you,  
 Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too  
 Vociferated logic kills me quite,  
 A noisy man is always in the right ;  
 I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,  
 Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,  
 And, when I hope his blunders are all out,  
 Reply discreetly—To be sure—no doubt !  
 DUBIUS is such a scrupulous good man—  
 Yes—you may catch him tripping if you can.  
 He would not, with a peremptory tone,  
 Assert the nose upon his face his own ;  
 With hesitation admirably slow,  
 He humbly hopes—presumes it may be so.  
 His evidence, if he were called by law  
 To swear to some enormity he saw,

For want of prominence and just relief,  
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.  
Through constant dread of giving truth offence,  
He ties up all his hearers in suspense ;  
Knows what he knows, as if he knew it not ;  
What he remembers, seems to have forgot ;  
His sole opinion, whatsoe'er befall,  
Centering at last in having none at all.  
Yet, though he tease and balk your listening ear,  
He makes one useful point exceeding clear ;  
Howe'er ingenious on his darling theme  
A sceptic in philosophy might seem,  
Reduced to practice his beloved rule  
Would only prove him a consummate fool ;  
Useless in him alike both brain and speech,  
Fate having placed all truth above his reach,  
His ambiguities his total sum,  
He might as well be blind, and deaf, and dumb.

Where men of judgment creep and feel their way,  
The positive pronounce without dismay ;  
Their want of right and intellect supplied  
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.  
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,  
They always are decisive, clear, and strong ;  
Where others toil with philosophic force,  
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course ;  
Flings at your head conviction in the lump.  
And gains remote conclusions at a jump ;  
Their own defect, invisible to them,  
Seen in another, they at once condemn ;  
And, though self-idolized in every case,  
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.  
The cause is plain, and not to be denied,  
The proud are always most provoked by pride ;

Few competitions but engender spite ;  
And those the most, where neither has a right.

The point of honour has been deemed of use,  
To teach good manners, and to curb abuse :  
Admit it true, the consequence is clear,  
Our polished manners are a mask we wear,  
And, at the bottom, barbarous still and rude,  
We are restrained, indeed, but not subdued.  
The very remedy, however sure,  
Springs from the mischief it intends to cure,  
And savage in its principle appears,  
Tried, as it should be, by the fruit it bears.  
'Tis hard, indeed, if nothing will defend  
Mankind from quarrels but their fatal end ;  
That now and then a hero must decease,  
That the surviving world may live in peace.  
Perhaps at last close scrutiny may show  
The practive dastardly, and mean and low ;  
That men engage in it compelled by force,  
And fear, not courage, is its proper source—  
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear  
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.  
At least to trample on our Maker's laws,  
And hazard life for any or no cause,  
To rush into a fixed eternal state  
Out of the very flames of rage and hate,  
Or send another shivering to the bar  
With all the guilt of such unnatural war,  
Whatever Use may urge, or Honour plead,  
On Reason's verdict is a madman's deed.  
Am I to set my life upon a throw,  
Because a bear is rude and surly ? No—  
A moral, sensible, and well-bred man  
Will not affront me ; and no other can.



Were I empowered to regulate the lists,  
 They should encounter with well-loaded fists ;  
 A Trojan combat would be something new,  
 Let DARES beat ENTELLUS black and blue ;  
 Then each might show, to his admiring friends,  
 In honourable bumps his rich amends,  
 And carry, in contusions of his skull,  
 A satisfactory receipt in full.

A story in which native humour reigns,  
 Is often useful, always entertains :  
 A graver fact, enlisted on your side,  
 May furnish illustration, well applied ;  
 But sedentary weavers of long tales  
 Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.  
 'Tis the most asinine employ on Earth,  
 To hear them tell of parentage and birth,  
 And echo conversations dull and dry,  
 Embellished with—*He said, and so said I*.  
 At every interview their route the same,  
 The repetition makes attention lame :  
 We bustle up with unsuccessful speed,  
 And in the saddest part cry—*Droll indeed !*  
 The path of narrative with care pursue,  
 Still making probability your clew ;  
 On all the vestiges of truth attend,  
 And let *them* guide you to a decent end.  
 Of all ambitions man may entertain,  
 The worst, that can invade a sickly brain,  
 Is that, which angles hourly for surprise,  
 And baits its hook with prodigies and lies.  
 Credulous infancy, or age as weak,  
 Are fittest auditors for such to seek,  
 Who to please others will themselves disgrace,  
 Yet please not, but affront you to your face.

A great retailer of this curious ware  
 Having unloaded and made many stare—  
 Can this be true?—an arch observer cries,  
 Yes, (rather moved) I saw it with these eyes ;  
 Sir ! I believe it on that ground alone ;  
 I could not had I seen it with my own.

A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct ;  
 The language plain, and incidents well linked ;  
 Tell not as new what every body knows,  
 And, new or old, still hasten to a close ;  
 There, centring in a focus round and neat,  
 Let all your rays of information meet.

What neither yields us profit nor delight  
 Is like a nurse's lullaby at night—  
 Guy Earl of Warwick and fair Eleanore,  
 Or giant-killing Jack, would please me more.

The pipe, with solemn interposing puff,  
 Makes half a sentence at a time enough ;  
 The dozing sages drop the drowsy strain,  
 Then pause, and puff—and speak, and pause again.  
 Such often, like the tube they so admire,  
 Important triflers ! have more smoke than fire.  
 Pernicious weed ! whose scent the fair annoys,  
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,  
 Thy worst effect is banishing for hours  
 The sex, whose presence civilizes ours :  
 Thou art indeed the drug a gardener wants,  
 To poison vermin that infest his plants ;  
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind,  
 As to despise the glory of our kind,  
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms  
 As little mercy, as he grubs and worms ?  
 They dare not wait the riotous abuse,  
 Thy thirst-creating steams at length produce,

When wine has given indecent language birth,  
 And forced the flood-gates of licentious mirth ;  
 For sea-born Venus her attachment shows  
 Still to that element, from which she rose,  
 And with a quiet, which no fumes disturb,  
 Sips meek infusions of a milder herb.

The emphatic speaker dearly loves to oppose,  
 In contact inconvenient, nose to nose.  
 As if the gnomon on his neighbour's pliz,  
 Touched with the magnet, had attracted his.  
 His whispered theme, dilated and at large,  
 Proves after all a wind-gun's airy charge,  
 An extract of his diary—no more,  
 A tasteless journal of the day before.  
 He walked abroad, o'ertaken in the rain,  
 Called on a friend, drank tea, stepped home again,  
 Resumed his purpose, had a world of talk  
 With one he stumbled on, and lost his walk.  
 I interrupt him with a sudden bow,  
 Adieu, dear sir ! lest you should lose it now

I cannot talk with civet in the room,  
 A fine puss-gentleman that's all perfume :  
 The sight's enough—no need to smell a beau—  
 Who thrusts his nose into a raree-show !  
 His odoriferous attempts to please  
 Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees ;  
 But we that make no honey, though we sting,  
 Poets, are sometimes apt to maul the thing.  
 'Tis wrong to bring into a mixed resort,  
 What makes some sick, and others *a-la-mort* ;  
 An argument of cogence, we may say,  
 Why such a one should keep himself away.

A graver coxcomb we may sometimes see,  
 Quite as absurd, though not so light as he :

A shallow brain behind a serious mask,  
 An oracle within an empty cask,  
 The solemn fop ; significant and budge ;  
 A fool with judges, amongst fools a judge :  
 He says but little, and that little said  
 Owes all its weight, like loaded dice, to lead.  
 His wit invites you by his looks to come,  
 But when you knock, he never is at home.  
 'Tis like a parcel sent you by the stage,  
 Some handsome present, as your hopes presage ;  
 'Tis heavy, bulky, and bids fair to prove  
 An absent friend's fidelity and love ;  
 But when unpacked, your disappointment groans  
 To find it stuffed with brickbats, earth, and stones.

Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,  
 In making known how oft they have been sick,  
 And give us in recitals of disease  
 A doctor's trouble, but without the fees ;  
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,  
 How an emetic or carthartic sped ;  
 Nothing is slightly touched, much less forgot,  
 Nose, ears, and eyes, seem present on the spot.  
 Now the distemper, spite of draught or pill,  
 Victorious seemed, and now the doctor's skill ;  
 And now—alas for unforeseen mishaps !  
 They put on a damp nightcap and relapse ;  
 They thought they must have died, they were so bad ;  
 Their peevish hearers almost wish they had.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch,  
 You always do too little or too much :  
 You speak with life, in hopes to entertain,  
 Your elevated voice goes through the brain ;  
 You fall at once into a lower key,  
 'That's worse—the drone-pipe of an humble bee.

The southern sash admits too strong a light,  
You rise and drop the curtain—now 'tis night.  
He shakes with cold—you stir the fire and strive  
To make a blaze—that's roasting him alive.  
Serve him with venison, and he chooses fish;  
With sole—that's just the sort he does not wish.  
He takes what he at first professed to loath,  
And in due time feeds heartily on both ;  
Ye still, o'erclouded with a constant frown,  
He does not swallow, but he gulps it down.  
Your hope to please him' vain on every plan,  
Himself should work that wonder, if he can—  
Alas ! his efforts double his distress,  
He likes yours little, and his own still less.  
Thus always teasing others, always teased,  
His only pleasure is—to be displeased.

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain  
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,  
And bear the marks upon a blushing face  
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.  
Our sensibilities are so acute,  
The fear of being silent makes us mute.  
We sometimes think we could a speech produce  
Much to the purpose, if our tongues were loose ;  
But being tried, it dies upon the lip,  
Faint as a chicken's note that has the pip :  
Our wasted oil unprofitably burns,  
Like hidden lamps in old sepulchral urns.  
Few Frenchmen of this evil have complained ;  
It seems as if we Britons were ordained,  
By way of wholesome curb upon our pride,  
To fear each other, fearing none beside.  
The cause perhaps inquiry may descry,  
Self-searching with an introverted eye,

Concealed within an unsuspected part,  
The vainest corner of our own vain heart :  
For ever aiming at the world's esteem,  
Our self-importance ruins its own scheme ;  
In other eyes our talents rarely shown,  
Become at length so splendid in our own,  
We dare not risk them into public view,  
Lest they miscarry of what seems their due.  
True modesty is a discerning grace,  
And only blushes in the proper place ;  
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks through fear,  
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t' appear :  
Humility the parent of the first,  
The last by vanity produced and nursed.  
The circle formed, we sit in silent state,  
Like figures drawn upon a dial plate ;  
Yes ma'am, and no ma'am, uttered softly, show  
Every five minutes how the minutes go ;  
Each individual, suffering a constraint  
Poetry may, but colours cannot paint ;  
As if in close committee on the sky,  
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry ;  
And finds a changing clime a happy source  
Of wise reflection, and well-timed discourse.  
We next inquire, but softly and by stealth,  
Like conservators of the public health,  
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,  
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic, and catarrh.  
That theme exhausted, a wide chasm ensues,  
Filled up at last with interesting news.  
Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,  
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed :  
But fear to call a more important cause,  
As if 'twere treason against English laws.

The visit paid, with ecstasy we come,  
As from a seven years transportation, home,  
And there resume an unembarrassed brow,  
Recovering what we lost we know not how,  
The faculties, that seemed reduced to nought,  
Expression and the privilege of thought.

The reeking, roaring hero of the chase,  
I give him over as a desperate case.  
Physicians write in hopes to work a cure,  
Never, if honest ones, when death is sure ;  
And though the fox he follows may be tamed,  
A mere fox-follower never is reclaimed.  
Some farrier should prescribe his proper course,  
Whose only fit companion is his horse ;  
Or if, deserving of a better doom,  
The noble beast judge otherwise, his groom.  
Yet e'en the rogue that serves him, though he stand,  
To take his honour's orders, cap in hand,  
Prefers his fellow grooms with much good sense,  
Their skill a truth, his master's a pretence.  
If neither horse nor groom affect the squire,  
Where can at last his jockeyship retire ?  
O, to the club, the scene of savage joys,  
The school of coarse good fellowship and noise ;  
There, in the sweet society of those,  
Whose friendship from his boyish years he chose,  
Let him improve his talent if he can,  
Till none but beasts acknowledge him a man.

Man's heart had been impenetrably sealed,  
Like theirs that cleave the flood or graze the field,  
Had not his Maker's all-bestowing hand  
Given him a soul, and bade him understand ;  
The reasoning power vouchsafed of course inferred  
The power to clothe that reason with his word ;

For all is perfect that God works on earth,  
And he, that gives conception, aids the birth.  
If this be plain, 'tis plainly understood,  
What uses of his boon the Giver would.  
The Mind, despatched upon her busy toil,  
Should range where Providence has blessed the soil ;  
Visiting every flower with labour meet,  
And gathering all her treasures sweet by sweet,  
She should imbue the tongue with what she sips,  
And shed the balmy blessing on the lips,  
That good diffused may more abundant grow,  
And speech may praise the power that bids it flow.  
Will the sweet warbler of the livelong night,  
That fills the listening lover with delight,  
Forget his harmony, with rapture heard,  
To learn the twittering of a meaner bird ?  
Or make the parrot's mimicry his choice,  
That odious libel on a human voice ?  
No—Nature unsophisticate by man,  
Starts not aside from her Creator's plan ;  
The melody, that was at first designed  
To cheer the rude forefathers of mankind,  
Is note for note delivered in our ears,  
In the last scene of her six thousand years. ;  
Yet Fashion, leader of a chattering train,  
Whom man, for his own hurt permits to reign,  
Who shifts and changes all things but his shape,  
And would degrade her votary to an ape,  
The fruitful parent of abuse and wrong,  
Holds a usurped dominion o'er his tongue ;  
There sits and prompts him with his own disgrace,  
Prescribes the theme, the tone, and the grimace,  
And, when accomplished in her wayward school,  
Calls gentleman whom she has made a fool.



'Tis an unutterable fixed decree,  
That none could frame or ratify but she,  
That heaven and hell, and righteousness and sin,  
Snares in his path, and foes that lurk within,  
God and his attributes (a field of day  
Where 'tis an angel's happiness to stray,)  
Fruits of his love and wonders of his might,  
Be never named in ears esteemed polite.  
That he who dares, when she forbids, be grave,  
Shall stand proscribed, a madman or a knave,  
A close designer not be believed,  
Or, if excused that charge, at least deceived.  
Oh folly, worthy of the nurse's lap,  
Give it the breast, or stop its mouth with pap !  
Is it incredible, or can it seem,  
A dream to any, except those that dream,  
That man should love his Maker, and *that* fire,  
Warming his heart, should at his lips transpire ?  
Know then, and modestly let fall your eyes,  
And veil your daring crest that braves the skies ;  
That air of insolence affronts your God,  
You need his pardon, and provoke his rod :  
Now, in a posture that becomes you more  
Than that heroic strut assumed before,  
Know, your arrears with every hour accrue  
For mercy shown, while wrath is justly due.  
The time is short, and there are souls on earth,  
Though future pain may serve for present mirth,  
Acquainted with the woes, that fear or shame,  
By Fashion taught, forbade them once to name,  
And, having felt the pangs you deem a jest,  
Have proved them truths too big to be expressed.—  
Go seek on revelation's hallowed ground,  
Sure to succeed, the remedy they found ;

Touched by that power that you have dared to mock,  
That makes seas stable, and dissolves the rock,  
Your heart shall yield a life-renewing stream,  
That fools, as you have done, shall call a dream.

It happened on a solemn eventide,  
Soon after He that was our Surety died,  
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,  
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,  
Sought their own village, busied as they went  
In musings worthy of the great event :  
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,  
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,  
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,  
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.  
The recollection like a vein of ore,  
The farther traced, enriched them still the more :  
They thought him, and they justly thought him, one  
Sent to do more than he appeared to have done ;  
To exalt a people and to place them high  
Above all else, and wondered he should die.  
Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,  
A stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,  
And asked them, with a kind, engaging air,  
What their affliction was, and begged a share.  
Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,  
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,  
Explained, illustrated, and searched so well  
The tender theme, on which they chose to dwell,  
That, reaching home, The night, they said, is near,  
We must not now be parted, sojourn here—  
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,  
And, made so welcome at their simple feast,  
He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,  
And left them both exclaiming, 'Twas the Lord !

Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say ?  
Did not they burn within us by the way ?

Now theirs was converse, such as it behooves  
Man to maintain, and such as God approves :  
Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,  
But yet successful, being aimed at him.  
Christ and his character their only scope,  
Their object, and their subject, and their hope,  
They felt what it became them much to feel,  
And, wanting him to loose the sacred seal,  
Found him as prompt as their desire was true,  
To spread the newborn glories in their view.—  
Well—what are ages and the lapse of time,  
Matched against truths, as lasting as sublime ?  
Can length of years on God himself exact ?  
Or make that fiction which was once a fact ?  
No—marble and recording brass decay,  
And, like the graver's memory pass away ;  
The works of man inherit, as is just,  
Their author's frailty, and return to dust :  
But truth divine for ever stands secure,  
Its head is guarded, as its base is sure ;  
Fixed in the rolling flood of endless years,  
The pillar of eternal plan appears,  
The raving storm and dashing wave defies,  
Built by that architect who built the skies.  
Hearts may be found, that harbour at this hour  
That love of Christ, and all its quickening power ;  
And lips unstained by folly or by strife,  
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life,  
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows  
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.  
O days of heaven, and nights of equal praise,  
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days,

When souls drawn upwards in communion sweet,  
 Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat,  
 Discourse, as if released and safe at home,  
 Of dangers passed, and wonders yet to come,  
 And spread the sacred treasures of the breast  
 Upon the lap of covenanted Rest.

What! always dreaming over heavenly things,  
 Like angel-heads in stone with pigeon-wings?  
 Canting and whining out all day the Word,  
 And half the night? Fanatic and absurd!  
 Mine be the friend less frequent in his prayers,  
 Who makes no bustle with his soul's affairs,  
 Whose wit can brighten up a wintry day,  
 And chase the splenetic dull hours away;  
 Content on earth in earthly things to shine,  
 Who waits for heaven ere he becomes divine,  
 Leaves saints t' enjoy those altitudes they teach,  
 And plucks the fruit placed more within his reach.

Well spoken, advocate of sin and shame,  
 Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.  
 Is sparkling wit the world's exclusive right?  
 The fixed fee-simple of the vain and light?  
 Can hopes of heaven, bright prospects of an hour,  
 That come to waft us out of Sorrow's power,  
 Obscure or quench a faculty, that finds  
 Its happiest soil in the serenest minds?  
 Religion curbs indeed its wanton play,  
 And brings the trifler under rigorous sway,  
 But gives it usefulness unknown before,  
 And, purifying makes it shine the more.  
 A Christian's wit is inoffensive light,  
 A beam that aids, but never grieves the sight;  
 Vigorous in age as in the flush of youth,  
 'Tis always active on the side of truth;

Temperance and peace ensure its healthful state,  
And make it brightest at its latest date.

Oh I have seen (nor hope perhaps in vain,  
Ere life go down, to see such sights again)  
A veteran warrior in the Christian field,  
Who never saw the sword he could not wield ;  
Grave without dulness, learned without pride,  
Exact, yet not precise, though meek, keen-eyed ;  
A man who would have foiled at their own play  
A dozen would-bes of the modern day ;  
Who, when occasion justified its use,  
Had wit as bright as ready to produce,  
Could fetch from records of an earlier age,  
Or from philosophy's enlightened page,  
His rich materials, and regale your ear  
With strains it was a privilege to hear ;  
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,  
And his chief glory, was the gospel theme ,  
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,  
His happy eloquence seemed there at home,  
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,  
But to treat justly what he loved so well.

It moves me more perhaps than folly ought,  
When some green heads, as void of wit as thought,  
Suppose *themselves* monopolists of sense,  
And wiser men's ability pretence.  
Though time will wear us, and we must grow old,  
Such men are not forgot as soon as cold ;  
Their fragrant memory will outlast their tomb,  
Embalmed for ever in its own perfume.  
And to say truth, though in its early prime,  
And when unstained with any grosser crime,  
Youth has a sprightliness and fire to boast,  
That in the valley of decline are lost,

And Virtue with peculiar charms appears,  
 Crowned with the garland of life's blooming years;  
 Yet Age by long experience well informed,  
 Well read, well tempered, with religion warmed,  
 That fire abated, which impels rash Youth,  
 Proud of his speed, to overshoot the truth,  
 As time improves the grape's authentic juice,  
 Mellows and makes the speech more fit for use,  
 And claims a reverence in its shortening day,  
 That 'tis an honour and a joy to pay.  
 The fruits of age, less fair, are yet more sound,  
 Than those a brighter season pours around;  
 And, like the stores autumnal suns mature,  
 Through wintry rigours unimpaired endure.

What is frantic frenzy, scorned so much,  
 And dreaded more than a contagious touch?  
 I grant it dangerous, and approve your fear,  
 That fire is catching if you draw too near;  
 But sage observers oft mistake the flame,  
 And give true piety that odious name.  
 To tremble (as the creature of an hour  
 Ought at the view of an almighty power)  
 Before his presence, at whose awful throne  
 All tremble in all worlds, except our own,  
 To supplicate his mercy, love his ways,  
 And prize them above pleasure, wealth, or praise,  
 Though common sense, allowed a casting voice,  
 And free from bias, must approve the choice,  
 Convicts a man fanatic in the extreme,  
 And wild as madness in the world's esteem.  
 But that disease, when soberly defined,  
 Is the false fire of an o'erheated mind;  
 It views the truth with a distorted eye,  
 And eithers warps or lays it useless by;

'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant, and draws  
 Its sordid nourishment from man's applause ;  
 And while at heart sin unrelinquished lies,  
 Presumes itself chief favourite of the skies.

'Tis such a light as putrefaction breeds  
 In fly-blown flesh, whereon the maggot feeds,  
 Shines in the dark, but, ushered into day,  
 The stench remains, the lustre dies away.

True bliss, if man may reach it, is composed  
 Of hearts in union mutually disclosed ;  
 And, farewell else all hope of pure delight,  
 Those hearts should be reclaimed, renewed, upright.  
 Bad men, profaning friendship's hallowed name,  
 Form in its stead, a covenant of shame,  
 A dark confederacy against the laws  
 Of virtue, and religion's glorious cause ;  
 They build each other up with dreadful skill,  
 As bastions set point-blank against God's will ;  
 Enlarge and fortify the dread redoubt,  
 Deeply resolved to shut a Saviour out ;  
 Call legions up from hell to back the deed ;  
 And, cursed with conquest, finally succeed.  
 But souls, that carry on a blest exchange  
 Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,  
 And with a fearless confidence make known  
 The sorrows sympathy esteems its own,  
 Daily derive increasing light and force  
 From such communion in their pleasant course,  
 Feel less the journey's roughness and its length,  
 Meet their opposers with united strength,  
 And, in one heart, in interest, and design  
 Gird up each other to the race divine.

But Conversation, choose what theme we may,  
 And chiefly when religion leads the way,

Should flow, like waters after summer showers,  
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.  
The Christian, in whose soul, though now distressed,  
Lives the dear thought of joys he once possessed,  
When all his glowing language issued forth  
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth,  
Will speak without disguise, and must impart,  
Sad as it is, his undissembling heart,  
Abhors constraint, and dares not feign a zeal,  
Or seem to boast a fire he does not feel.  
The song of Zion is a tasteless thing,  
Unless, when rising on a joyful wing,  
The soul can mix with the celestial bands,  
And give the strain the compass it demands.

Strange tidings these to tell a world, who treat  
All but their own experience as deceit!  
Will they believe, though credulous enough  
To swallow much upon much weaker proof,  
That there are blest inhabitants of earth,  
Partakers of a new ethereal birth,  
Their hopes, desires, and purposes estranged  
From things terrestrial, and divinely changed.  
Their very language, of a kind, that speaks  
The soul's sure interest in the good she seeks,  
Who deal with Scripture, its importance felt,  
As Tully with philosophy once dealt,  
And in the silent watches of the night,  
And through the scenes of toil-renewing light,  
The social walk, or solitary ride,  
Keep still the dear companion at their side?  
No—shame upon a self-disgracing age,  
God's work may serve an ape upon a stage  
With such a jest, as filled with hellish glee  
Certain invisibles as shrewd as he;



But veneration or respect finds none,  
Save from the subjects of that work alone.  
The World grown old her deep discernment shows,  
Claps spectacles on her sagacious nose,  
Peruses closely the true Christian's face,  
And finds it a mere mask of sly grimace ;  
Usurps God's office, lays his bosom bare,  
And finds hypocrisy close lurking there ;  
And, serving God herself through mere constraint,  
Concludes his unfeigned love of him a feint.  
And yet, God knows, look human nature through,  
(And in due time the World shall know it too)  
That since the flowers of Eden felt the blast,  
That after man's defection laid all waste,  
Sincerity tow'rds the heart-searching God  
Has made the new-born creature her abode,  
Nor shall be found in unregenerate souls,  
Till the last fire burn all between the poles.  
Sincerity ! why 'tis his only pride ;  
Weak and imperfect in all grace beside,  
He knows that God demands his heart entire,  
And gives him all his just demands require.  
Without it his pretensions were as vain,  
As having it he deems the World's disdain ;  
That great defect would cost him not alone  
Man's favourable judgment, but his own ;  
His birthright shaken, and no longer clear,  
Than while his conduct proves his heart sincere.  
Retort the charge, and let the World be told  
She boasts a confidence she does not hold ;  
That, conscious of her crimes, she feels instead  
A cold misgiving, and a killing dread :  
That while in health the ground of her support  
Is madly to forget that life is short ;

That sick she trembles, knowing she must die,  
Her hope presumption, and her faith a lie ;  
That while she dotes, and dreams that she believes,  
She mocks her Maker, and herself deceives,  
Her utmost reach, historical assent,  
The doctrines warped to what they never meant ;  
That truth itself is in her head as dull  
And useless as a candle in a scull,  
And all her love of God a groundless claim,  
A trick upon the canvass, painted flame.  
Tell her again, the sneer upon her face,  
And all her censures of the work of grace,  
Are insincere, meant only to conceal  
A dread she would not, yet is forced to feel ;  
That in her heart the Christian she reveres,  
And while she seems to scorn him, only fears.

A poet does not work by square or line,  
As smiths and joiners perfect a design ;  
At least we moderns, our attention less,  
Beyond the example of our sires digress,  
And claim a right to scamper and run wide,  
Where ever chance, caprice, or fancy guide.  
The World and I fortuitously met ;  
I owed a trifle, and have paid the debt ;  
She did me wrong, I recompensed the deed,  
And, having struck the balance, now proceed.  
Perhaps, however, as some years have passed,  
Since she and I conversed together last,  
And I have lived recluse in rural shades,  
Which seldom a distinct report pervades,  
Great changes and new manners have occurred,  
And blest reforms, that I have never heard,  
And she may now be as discreet and wise,  
As once absurd in all discerning eyes.

Sobriety perhaps may now be found,  
Where once Intoxication pressed the ground ;  
The subtle and injurious may be just,  
And he grown chaste, that was the slave of lust ;  
Arts once esteemed may be with shame dismissed ;  
Charity may relax the miser's fist ;  
The gamester may have cast his cards away,  
Forgot to curse, and only kneel to pray.  
It has indeed been told me (with what weight,  
How credibly, 'tis hard for me to state)  
That fables old, that seemed for ever mute,  
Revived are hastening into fresh repute,  
And gods and goddesses, discarded long  
Like useless lumber, or a stroller's song,  
Are bringing into vogue their heathen train,  
And Jupiter bids fair to rule again ;  
That certain feasts are instituted now,  
Where Venus hears the lover's tender vow ;  
That all Olympus through the country roves,  
To consecrate our few remaining groves,  
And Echo learns politely to repeat  
The praise of names for ages obsolete :  
That having proved the weakness, it should seem,  
Of revelation's ineffectual beam,  
To bring the passions under sober sway,  
And give the moral springs their proper play,  
They mean to try what may at last be done,  
By stout substantial gods of wood and stone,  
And whether Roman rites may not produce  
The virtues of old Rome for English use.  
May such success attend the pious plan,  
May Mercury once more embellish man,  
Grace him again with long-forgotten arts,  
Reclaim his taste, and brighten up his parts .

Make him athletic, as in days of old,  
 Learned at the bar, in the palæstra bold,  
 Divest the rougher sex of female airs,  
 And teach the softer not to copy theirs :  
 The change shall please, nor shall it matter aught  
 Who works the wonder, if it be but wrought.  
 'Tis time, however, if the case stands thus,  
 For us plain folks, and all who side with us,  
 To build our altar, confident and bold,  
 And say as stern. Elijah said of old,  
 The strife now stands upon a fair award,  
 If Israel's Lord be God, then serve the Lord :  
 If he be silent, faith is all a whim,  
 Then Baal is the God, and worship him.

Digression is so much in modern use,  
 Thought is so rare, and fancy so profuse,  
 Some never seem so wide of their intent,  
 As when returning to the theme they meant ;  
 As mendicants, whose business is to roam,  
 Make every parish but their own their home.  
 Though such continual zigzags in a book,  
 Such drunken reelings have an awkward look,  
 And I had rather creep to what is true,  
 Than rove and stagger with no mark in view ;  
 Yet to consult a little, seemed no crime,  
 The freakish humour of the present time :  
 But now to gather up what seems dispersed,  
 And touch the subject I designed at first,  
 May prove, though much beside the rules of art,  
 Best for the public, and my wisest part.  
 And first, let no man charge me, that I mean  
 To close in sable every social scene,  
 And give good company a face severe,  
 As if they met around a father's bier ;

For tell some men, that pleasure all their bent,  
And laughter all their work, is life mispent,  
Their wisdom bursts into this sage reply,  
Then mirth is sin, and we should always cry.  
To find the medium asks some share of wit,  
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.  
But though life's valley be a vale of tears,  
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,  
Whose glory, with a light that never fades,  
Shoots between scattered rocks and opening shades,  
And, while it shows the land the soul desires,  
The language of the land she seeks inspires.  
Thus touched, the tongue receives a sacred cure  
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure ;  
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech  
Pursues the course that Truth and Nature teach ;  
No longer labours merely to produce  
The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use :  
Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,  
Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme,  
While all the happy man possessed before,  
The gift of nature, or the classic store,  
Is made subservient to the grand design,  
For which Heaven formed the faculty divine.  
So, should an idiot, while at large he strays,  
Find the sweet lyre on which an artist plays ;  
With rash and awkward force the chords he shakes,  
And grins with wonder at the jar he makes ;  
But let the wise and well-instructed hand  
Once take the shell beneath his just command,  
In gentle sounds it seems as it complained  
Of the rude injuries it late sustained,  
Till tuned at length to some immortal song,  
It sounds Jehovah's name, and pours his praise along.

## RETIREMENT.

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—————studiis florens ignobilis oti.

VIRG. Geor. Lib. 4.

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HACKNEYED in business, wearied at that oar,  
Which thousands, once fast chained to, quit no more,  
But which, when life at ebb runs weak and low,  
All wish, or seem to wish, they could forego ;  
The statesman, lawyer, merchant, man of trade,  
Pants for the refuge of some rural shade,  
Where, all his long anxieties forgot  
Amid the charms of a sequestered spot,  
Or recollected only to gild o'er,  
And add a smile to what was sweet before,  
He may possess the joys he thinks he sees,  
Lay his old age upon the lap of Ease,  
Improve the remnant of his wasted span,  
And, having lived a trifler, die a man.  
Thus Conscience pleads her cause within the breast,  
Though long rebelled against, not yet suppressed,  
And calls a creature formed for God alone,  
For Heaven's high purposes, and not his own,  
Calls him away from selfish ends and aims,  
From what debilitates and what inflames,  
From cities humming with a restless crowd,  
Sordid as active, ignorant as loud,  
Whose highest praise is that they live in vain,  
The dupes of pleasure, or the slaves of gain,

Where works of man are clustered close around,  
 And works of God are hardly to be found,  
 To regions where, in spite of sin and woe,  
 Traces of Eden are still seen below,  
 Where mountain, river, forest, field, and grove,  
 Remind him of his Maker's power and love.  
 'Tis well if, looked for at so late a day,  
 In the last scene of such a senseless play,  
 True wisdom will attend his feeble call,  
 And grace his action ere the curtain fall.  
 Souls that have long despised their heavenly birth,  
 Their wishes all impregnated with earth,  
 For threescore years employed with ceaseless care  
 In catching smoke and feeding upon air,  
 Conversant only with the ways of men,  
 Rarely redeem the short remaining ten.  
 Inveterate habits choke the unfruitful heart.  
 Their fibres penetrate its tenderest part,  
 And, draining its nutritious powers to feed  
 Their noxious growth, starve every better seed.

Happy, if full of days—but happier far,  
 If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,  
 Sick of the service of a world, that feeds  
 Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,  
 We can escape from Custom's idiot sway,  
 To serve the Sovereign we were born t' obey.  
 Then sweet to muse upon his skill displayed  
 (Infinite skill) in all that he has made!  
 To trace in Nature's most minute design  
 The signature and stamp of power divine,  
 Contrivance intricate, expressed with ease,  
 Where unassisted sight no beauty sees,  
 The shapely limb, and lubricated joint  
 Within the small dimensions of a point,

Muscle and nerve miraculously spun,  
His mighty work, who speaks, and it is done,  
Th' invisible in things scarce seen revealed,  
To whom an atom is an ample field ;  
To wonder at a thousand insect forms,  
These hatched, and those resuscitated worms,  
New life ordained and brighter scenes to share,  
Once prone on earth, now buoyant upon air,  
Whose shape would make them, had they bulk and size,  
More hideous foes than fancy can devise ;  
With helmet-heads, and dragon-scales adorned,  
The mighty myriads now securely scorned,  
Would mock the majesty of man's high birth,  
Despise his bulwarks, and unpeople earth.  
Then with a glance of fancy to survey,  
Far as the faculty can stretch away,  
Ten thousand rivers poured at his command  
From urns that never fail, through every land  
These like a deluge with impetuous force,  
Those winding modestly a silent course ;  
The cloud-surmounting Alps, the fruitful vales ;  
Seas, on which every nation spreads her sails ;  
The sun, a world whence other worlds drink light,  
The crescent moon, the diadem of night ;  
Stars countless, each in his appointed place,  
Fast anchored in the deep abyss of space—  
At such a sight to catch the poet's flame,  
And with a rapture like his own exclaim,  
These are thy glorious works, thou Source of Good  
How dimly seen, how faintly understood !  
Thine, and upheld by thy paternal care,  
This universal frame, thus wondrous fair ;  
Thy power divine, and bounty beyond thought,  
Adored and praised in all that thou hast wrought.—



Absorbed in that immensity I see,  
 I shrink abased, and yet aspire to thee;  
 Instruct me, guide me to that heavenly day,  
 Thy words more clearly than thy works display,  
 That, while thy truths my grosser thoughts refine,  
 I may resemble thee, and call thee mine.

O blest proficiency ! surpassing all,  
 That men erroneously their glory call,  
 The recompense that arts or arms can yield,  
 The bar, the senate, or the tented field.  
 Compared with this sublimest life below,  
 Ye kings and rulers, what have courts to show ?  
 Thus studied, used and consecrated thus,  
 On earth what is, seems formed indeed for us :  
 Not as the plaything of a froward child,  
 Fretful unless diverted and beguiled,  
 Much less to feed and fan the fatal fires  
 Of pride, ambition, or impure desires,  
 But as a scale, by which the soul ascends  
 From mighty means to more important ends,  
 Securely, though by steps but rarely trod,  
 Mounts from inferior beings up to God,  
 And sees, by no fallacious light or dim,  
 Earth made for man, and man himself for him.

Not that I mean to approve, or would enforce,  
 A superstitious and monastic course :  
 Truth is not local, God alike pervades  
 And fills the world of traffic and the shades,  
 And may be feared amidst the busiest scenes,  
 Or scorned where business never intervenes.  
 But 'tis not easy with a mind like ours,  
 Conscious of weakness in its noblest powers,  
 And in a world where, other ills apart,  
 The roving eye misleads the careless heart,

To limit Thought, by nature prone to stray  
 Wherever freakish Fancy points the way ;  
 To bid the pleadings of self-love be still,  
 Resign our own and seek our Maker's will ;  
 To spread the page of Scripture, and compare  
 Our conduct with the laws engraven there ;  
 To measure all that passes in the breast,  
 Faithfully, fairly, by that sacred test ;  
 To dive into the secret deeps within,  
 To spare no passion and no favourite sin,  
 And search the themes, important above all,  
 Ourselves, and our recovery from our fall.  
 But leisure, silence, and a mind released  
 From anxious thoughts how wealth may be increased,  
 How to secure, in some propitious hour,  
 The point of interest, or the post of power,  
 A soul serene, and equally retired  
 From objects too much dreaded or desired,  
 Safe from the clamours of perverse dispute,  
 At least are friendly to the great pursuit.

Opening the map of God's extensive plan,  
 We find a little isle, this life of man ;  
 Eternity's unknown expanse appears  
 Circling around and limiting his years.  
 The busy race examine and explore  
 Each creek and cavern of the dangerous shore,  
 With care collect what in their eyes excels,  
 Some shining pebbles, and some weeds and shells ;  
 Thus laden, dream that they are rich and great,  
 And happiest he that groans beneath his weight.  
 The waves o'ertake them in their serious play,  
 And every hour sweeps multitudes away ;  
 They shriek and sink, survivors start and weep,  
 Pursue their sport, and follow to the deep.

A few forsake the throng ; with lifted eyes  
Ask wealth of Heaven, and gain a real prize,  
Truth, wisdom, *grace*, and peace like that above,  
Sealed with his signet whom they serve and love ;  
Scorned by the rest, with patient hope they wait  
A kind release from their imperfect state,  
And unregretted are soon snatched away  
From scenes of sorrow into glorious day.

Nor these alone prefer a life recluse,  
Who seek retirement for its proper use ;  
The love of change, that lives in every breast,  
Genius and temper, and desire of rest,  
Discordant motives in one centre meet,  
And each inclines its votary to retreat.  
Some minds by nature are averse to noise,  
And hate the tumult half the world enjoys,  
The lure of avarice, or the pompous prize,  
That courts display before ambitious eyes ;  
The fruits that hang on pleasure's flowery stem,  
Whate'er enchants them, are no snares to them.  
To them the deep recess of dusky groves,  
Or forest, where the deer securely roves,  
The fall of waters, and the song of birds,  
And hills that echo to the distant herds,  
Are luxuries excelling all the glare  
The world can boast, and her chief favourites share.  
With eager step, and carelessly arrayed,  
For such a cause the poet seeks the shade ;  
From all he sees he catches new delight,  
Pleased Fancy claps her pinions at the sight,  
The rising or the setting orb of day,  
The clouds that flit, or slowly float away,  
Nature in all the various shapes she wears,  
Frowning in storms, or breathing gentle airs ;

The snowy robe her wintry state assumes,  
Her summer heats, her fruits, and her perfumes ;  
All, all alike transport the glowing bard,  
Success in rhyme his glory and reward.  
O Nature ! whose Elysian scenes disclose  
His bright perfections, at whose word they rose ;  
Next to that power, who formed thee and sustain  
Be thou the great inspirer of my strains.  
Still, as I touch the lyre, do thou expand  
Thy genuine charms, and guide an artless hand  
That I may catch a fire but rarely known,  
Give useful light, though I should miss renown  
And, poring on thy page, whose every line  
Bears proof of an intelligence divine,  
May feel a heart enriched by what it pays,  
But builds its glory on its Maker's praise.  
Woe to the man whose wit disclaims its us  
Glittering in vain, or only to seduce,  
Who studies nature with a wanton eye,  
Admires the work, but slips the lesson by  
His hours of leisure and recess employs  
In drawing pictures of forbidden joys,  
Retires to blazon his own worthless nam  
Or shoot the careless with a surer aim.

The lover too shuns business and alarm.  
Tender idolater of absent charms.  
Saints offer nothing in their warmest prayer  
That he devotes not with a zeal like theirs ;  
'Tis consecration of his heart, soul, time.  
And every thought that wanders is a crime  
In sighs he worships his supremely fair,  
And weeps a sad libation in despair ;  
Adores a creature, and, devout in vain.  
Wins in return an answer of disdain.

As woodbine weds the plant within her reach,  
Rough elm, or smooth-grained ash, or glossy beech,  
In spiral rings ascends the trunk, and lays  
Her golden tassels on the leafy sprays,  
But does a mischief while she lends a grace,  
Straitening its growth by such a strict embrace ;  
So love, that clings around the noblest minds,  
Forbids the advancement of the soul he binds ;  
The suitor's air indeed he soon improves,  
And forms it to the taste of her he loves,  
Teaches his eyes a language, and no less  
Refines his speech, and fashions his address ;  
But farewell promises of happier fruits,  
Manly designs, and learning's grave pursuits :  
Girt with a chain he cannot wish to break,  
His only bliss is sorrow for her sake ;  
Who will may pant for glory, and excel,  
Her smile his aim, all higher aims farewell !  
'Thyrsis, Alexis, or whatever name  
May least offend against so pure a flame,  
Though sage advice of friends the most sincere,  
Sounds harshly in so delicate an ear,  
And lovers, of all creatures, tame or wild,  
Can least brook management, however mild ;  
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms  
The fiercest animals with magic charms)  
Risk an intrusion on thy pensive mood,  
And woo and win thee to thy proper good.  
Pastoral images and still retreats,  
Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,  
Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,  
Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day dreams,  
All are enchantments in a case like thine,  
Conspire against thy peace with one design,

Sooth thee to make thee but a surer prey,  
 And feed the fire that wastes thy powers away.  
 Up—God has formed thee with a wiser view,  
 Not to be led in chains, but to subdue ;  
 Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first  
 Points out a conflict with thyself, the worst.  
 Woman indeed, a gift he would bestow,  
 When he designed a paradise below,  
 The richest earthly boon his hands afford,  
 Deserves to be beloved, but not adored.  
 Post away swiftly to more active scenes,  
 Collect the scattered truths that study gleans,  
 Mix with the world, but with its wiser part,  
 No longer give an image all thine heart ;  
 Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine,  
 'Tis God's just claim, prerogative divine.

Virtuous and faithful HEBERDEN, whose skill  
 Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil,  
 Gives melancholy up to Nature's care,  
 And sends the patient into purer air.  
 Look where he comes—in this embowered alcove  
 Stand close concealed, and see a statue move :  
 Lips busy, and eyes fixed, foot falling slow,  
 Arms hanging idly down, hands clasped below,  
 Interpret to the marking eye distress,  
 Such as its symptoms can alone express.  
 That tongue is silent now ; that silent tongue  
 Could argue once, could jest or join the song,  
 Could give advice, could censure or commend,  
 Or charm the sorrows of a drooping friend.  
 Renounced alike its office and its sport,  
 Its brisker and its graver strains fall short ;  
 Both fail beneath a fever's secret sway,  
 And like a summer brook are passed away.

This is a sight for Pity to peruse,  
Till she resemble faintly what she views,  
Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,  
Pierced with the woes that she laments in vain.  
This, of all maladies that man infest,  
Claims most compassion, and receives the least :  
Job felt it, when he groaned beneath the rod  
And the barbed arrows of a frowning God ;  
And such emollients as his friends could spare,  
Friends such as his for modern Jobs prepare.  
Blest, rather curst, with hearts that never feel,  
Kept snug in caskets of close-hammered steel,  
With mouths made only to grin wide and eat,  
And minds, that deem derided pain a treat,  
With limbs of British oak, and nerves of wire,  
And wit that puppet-prompters might inspire,  
Their sovereign nostrum is a clumsy joke  
On pangs enforced with God's severest stroke.  
But with a soul, that ever felt the sting  
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing :  
Not to molest, or irritate, or raise  
A laugh at his expense, is slender praise ;  
He, that has not usurped the name of man,  
Does all, and deems too little all, he can,  
To assuage the throbbings of the festered part,  
And staunch the bleedings of a broken heart.  
'Tis not, as heads that never ache suppose,  
Forgery of fancy, and dreams of woes ;  
Man is a harp, whose chords elude the sight,  
Each yielding harmony disposed aright ;  
The screws reversed (a task which, if he please,  
God in a moment executes with ease,)  
Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose,  
Lost, till he tune them, all their power and use.

Then neither healthy wilds, nor scenes as fair  
As ever recompensed the peasant's care,  
Nor soft declivities with tufted hills,  
Nor view of waters turning busy mills,  
Parks in which Art preceptress Nature weds,  
Nor gardens interspersed with flowery beds,  
Nor gales, that catch the scent of blooming groves,  
And waft it to the mourner as he roves,  
Can call up life into his faded eye,  
That passes all he sees unheeded by :  
No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels,  
No cure for such, till God, who makes them, heals,  
And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,  
That yields not to the touch of human skill,  
Improve the kind occasion, understand  
A father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand.  
To thee the day-spring, and the blaze of noon,  
The purple evening, and resplendent moon,  
The stars, that sprinkled o'er the vault of night,  
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,  
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,  
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine :  
Yet seek him, in his favour life is found,  
All bliss beside a shadow or a sound :  
Then heaven, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,  
Shall seem to start into a second birth ;  
Nature, assuming a more lovely face,  
Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,  
Shall be despised and overlooked no more,  
Shall fill thee with delight unfelt before,  
Impart to things inanimate a voice,  
And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;  
The sound shall run along the winding vales,  
And thou enjoy an Eden ere it fails.



Ye groves, (the statesman at his desk exclaims,  
Sick of a thousand disappointed aims,)  
My patrimonial treasure and my pride,  
Beneath your shades your gray possessor hide,  
Receive me languishing for that repose  
The servant of the public never knows,  
Ye saw me once (ah, those regretted days,  
When boyish innocence was all my praise !)  
Hour after hour delightfully allot  
To studies then familiar, since forgot,  
And cultivate a taste for ancient song,  
Catching its ardour as I mused along ;  
Nor seldom, as propitious Heaven might send,  
What once I valued and could boast, a friend,  
Were witnesses how cordially I pressed  
His undissembling virtue to my breast ;  
Receive me now, not incorrupt as then,  
Nor guiltless of corrupting other men,  
But versed in arts, that, while they seem to stay  
A falling empire, hasten its decay.  
To the fair haven of my native home,  
The wreck of what I was, fatigued I come ;  
For once I can approve the patriot's voice,  
And make the course he recommends my choice :  
We meet at last in one sincere desire,  
His wish and mine both prompt me to retire.  
'Tis done—he steps into the welcome chaise,  
Lolls at his ease behind four handsome bays,  
That whirl away from business and debate  
The disencumbered Atlas of the state.  
Ask not the boy, who when the breeze of morn  
First shakes the glittering drops from every thorn,  
Unfolds his flock, then under bank or bush  
Sits linking cherry stones, or plating rush

How fair is Freedom?—he was always free :  
To carve his rustic name upon a tree,  
To snare the mole, or with ill-fashioned hook  
To draw the incautious minnow from the brook,  
Are life's prime pleasures in his simple view,  
His flock the chief concern he ever knew ;  
She shines but little in his heedless eyes,  
The good we never miss we rarely prize :  
But ask the noble drudge in state affairs,  
Escaped from office and its constant cares,  
What charms he sees in Freedom's smile expressed,  
In freedom lost so long, now repossessed ;  
The tongue, whose strains were cogent as commands,  
Revered at home, and felt in foreign lands,  
Shall own itself a stammerer in that cause,  
Or plead its silence as its best applause.  
He knows indeed that whether dressed or rude,  
Wild without art or artfully subdued,  
Nature in every form inspires delight,  
But never marked her with so just a sight.  
Her hedge-row shrubs, a variegated store,  
With woodbine and wild roses mantled o'er,  
Green balks and furrowed lands, the stream that spreads  
Its cooling vapour o'er the dewy meads,  
Downs, that almost escape the inquiring eye,  
That melt and fade into the distant sky,  
Beauties he lately slighted as he passed,  
Seem all created since he travelled last.  
Master of all the enjoyments he designed,  
No rough annoyance rankling in his mind,  
What early philosophic hours he keeps,  
How regular his meals, how sound he sleeps !  
Not sounder he, that on the mainmast head,  
While morning kindles with a windy red,

Begins a long look-out for distant land,  
Nor quits till evening watch his giddy stand,  
Then swift descending with a seaman's haste,  
Slips to his hammock, and forgets the blast.  
He chooses company, but not the squire's  
Whose wit is rudeness, whose good-breeding tires ;  
Nor yet the parson's, who would gladly come,  
Obsequious when abroad, though proud at home ;  
Nor can he much affect the neighbouring peer,  
Whose toe of emulation treads too near ;  
But wisely seeks a more convenient friend,  
With whom, dismissing forms, he may unbend :  
A man, whom marks of condescending grace  
Teach, while they flatter him, his proper place ;  
Who comes when called, and at a word withdraws,  
Speaks with reserve, and listens with applause ;  
Some plain mechanic, who, without pretence  
To birth or wit, nor gives nor takes offence ;  
On whom he rests well-pleas'd his weary powers,  
And talks and laughs away his vacant hours.  
The tide of life, swift always in its course,  
May run in cities with a brisker force,  
But nowhere with a current so serene,  
Or half so clear, as in the rural scene.  
Yet how fallacious is all earthly bliss,  
What obvious truths the wisest heads may miss !  
Some pleasures live a month, and some a year,  
But short the date of all we gather here ;  
No happiness is felt, except the true,  
That does not charm the more for being new.  
This observation, as it chanced, not made,  
Or, if the thought occurred, not duly weigh'd ;  
He sighs—for after all, by slow degrees,  
The spot he loved has lost the power to please ;

To cross his ambling pony day by day,  
 Seems at the best but dreaming life away ;  
 The prospect, such as might enchant despair,  
 He views it not, or sees no beauty there ;  
 With aching heart, and discontented looks,  
 Returns at noon to billiards or to books,  
 But feels, while grasping at his faded joys,  
 A secret thirst of his renounced employs.  
 He chides the tardiness of every post,  
 Pants to be told of battles won or lost,  
 Blames his own indolence, observes, though late,  
 'Tis criminal to leave a sinking state,  
 Flies to the levee, and, received with grace,  
 Kneels, kisses hands, and shines again in place.

Suburban villas, highway-side retreats,  
 That dread the encroachment of our growing streets,  
 Tight boxes neatly sashed, and in a blaze  
 With all a July sun's collected rays,  
 Delight the citizen, who, gasping there,  
 Breathes clouds of dust, and calls it country air,  
 O sweet retirement ! who would balk the thought,  
 That could afford retirement, or could not ?  
 'Tis such an easy walk, so smooth and straight,  
 The second milestone fronts the garden gate ;  
 A step if fair, and, if a shower approach,  
 You find safe shelter in the next stage-coach.  
 There, prisoned in a parlour snug and small,  
 Like bottled wasps upon a southern wall,  
 The man of business and his friends compressed  
 Forget their labours, and yet find no rest ;  
 But still 'tis rural—trees are to be seen  
 From every window, and the fields are green ;  
 Ducks paddle in the pond before the door,  
 And what could a remoter scene show more ?

A sense of elegance we rarely find  
The portion of a mean or vulgar mind ;  
And ignorance of better things makes man,  
Who cannot much, rejoice in what he can ;  
And he that deems his leisure well bestowed  
In contemplation of a turnpike-road,  
Is occupied as well, employs his hours  
As wisely, and as much improves his powers,  
As he, that slumbers in pavilions graced  
With all the charms of an accomplished taste.  
Yet hence, alas ! insolvencies ; and hence  
The unpitied victim of ill-judged expense,  
From all his wearisome engagements freed,  
Shakes hands with business, and retires indeed.

Your prudent grand-mammas, ye modern belles,  
Content with Bristol, Bath, and Tunbridge-wells,  
When health required it would consent to roam,  
Else more attached to pleasures found at home.  
But now alike, gay widow, virgin, wife,  
Ingenious to diversify dull life,  
In coaches, chaises, caravans, and hoys,  
Fly to the coast for daily, nightly joys ;  
And all, impatient of dry land, agree  
With one consent to rush into the sea.—  
Ocean exhibits, fathomless and broad,  
Much of the power and majesty of God.  
He swathes about the swelling of the deep,  
That shines and rests, as infants smile and sleep ;  
Vast as it is, it answers as it flows  
The breathings of the lightest air that blows ;  
Curling and whitening over all the waste,  
The rising waves obey the increasing blast,  
Abrupt and horrid as the tempest roars,  
Thunder and flash upon the steadfast shores,

Till he that rides the whirlwind, checks the rein,  
 Then all the world of waters sleeps again.—  
 Nereids or Dryads, as the fashion leads,  
 Now in the floods, now panting in the meads,  
 Votaries of Pleasure still, where'er she dwells,  
 Near barren rocks, in palaces or cells,  
 O grant a poet leave to recommend  
 (A poet fond of Nature, and your friend)  
 Her slighted works to your admiring view ;  
 Her works must needs excel, who fashioned you.  
 Would ye, when rambling in your morning ride,  
 With some unmeaning coxcomb at your side,  
 Condemn the prattler for his idle pains,  
 To waste unheard the music of his strains,  
 And, deaf to all the impertinence of tongue,  
 That, while it courts, affronts and does you wrong,  
 Mark well the finished plan without a fault,  
 The seas globose and huge, the o'erarching vault,  
 Earth's millions daily fed, a world employed  
 In gathering plenty yet to be enjoyed,  
 Till gratitude grew vocal in the praise  
 Of God, beneficent in all his ways ;  
 Graced with such wisdom, how would beauty shine ?  
 Ye want but that to seem indeed divine.

Anticipated rents, and bills unpaid,  
 Force many a shining youth into the shade,  
 Not to redeem his time, but his estate,  
 And play the fool, but at a cheaper rate.  
 There, hid in loathed obscurity, removed  
 From pleasures left, but never more beloved,  
 He just endures, and with a sickly spleen  
 Sighs o'er the beauties of the charming scene.  
 Nature indeed looks prettily in rhyme ;  
 Streams tinkle sweetly in poetic chime :

The warblings of the blackbird, clear and strong,  
Are musical enough in Thompson's song :  
And Cobham's groves, and Windsor's green retreats,  
When Pope describes them, have a thousand sweets ;  
He likes the country, but in truth must own  
Most likes it, when he studies it in town.

Poor Jack—no matter who—for when I blame  
I pity, and must therefore sink the name,  
Lived in his saddle, loved the chase, the course,  
And always, ere he mounted, kissed his horse.  
The estate, his sires had owned in ancient years,  
Was quickly distanced, matched against a peer's.  
Jack vanished, was regretted and forgot :  
'Tis wild good-nature's never-failing lot.  
At length, when all had long supposed him dead,  
By cold submersion, razor, rope, or lead,  
My Lord, alighting at his usual place,  
The Crown, took notice of an ostler's face.  
Jack knew his friend, but hoped in that disguise  
He might escape the most observing eyes,  
And whistling, as if unconcerned and gay,  
Curried his nag, and looked another way.  
Convinced at last, upon a nearer view,  
'Twas he, the same, the very Jack he knew,  
O'erwhelmed at once with wonder, grief, and joy,  
He pressed him much to quit his base employ ;  
His countenance, his purse, his heart, his hand,  
Influence and power, were all at his command :  
Peers are not always generous as well-bred,  
But Granby was, meant truly what he said.  
Jack bowed and was obliged—confessed 'twas strange,  
That so retired he should not wish a change,  
But knew no medium between guzzling beer,  
And his old stint—three thousand pounds a-year.

Thus some retire to nourish hopeless woe ;  
 Some seeking happiness not found below ;  
 Some to comply with humour, and a mind  
 To social scenes by nature disinclined ;  
 Some swayed by fashion, some by deep disgust ;  
 Some self-impoverished, and because they must ;  
 But few that court Retirement are aware  
 Of half the toils they must encounter there.

Lucrative offices are seldom lost  
 For want of powers proportioned to the post :  
 Give e'en a dunce the employment he desires,  
 And he soon finds the talents it requires ;  
 A business with an income at its heels  
 Furnishes always oil for its own wheels.  
 But in his arduous enterprise to close  
 His active years with indolent repose,  
 He finds the labours of that state exceed  
 His utmost faculties, severe indeed.  
 'Tis easy to resign a toilsome place,  
 But not to manage leisure with a grace :  
 Absence of occupation is not rest,  
 A mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.  
 The veteran steed, excused his task at length,  
 In kind compassion of his failing strength,  
 And turned into the park or mead to graze,  
 Exempt from future service all his days,  
 There feels a pleasure perfect in its kind,  
 Ranges at liberty, and snuffs the wind  
 But when his lord would quit the busy road,  
 To taste a joy like that he had bestowed,  
 He proves, less happy than his favoured brute,  
 A life of ease a difficult pursuit.  
 Thought, to the man that never thinks, may seem  
 As natural as when asleep to dream ;



But reveries (for human minds will act)  
 Specious in show, impossible in fact,  
 Those flimsy webs, that break as soon as wrought,  
 Attain not to the dignity of thought :  
 Nor yet the swarms, that occupy the brain,  
 Where dreams of dress, intrigue, and pleasure reign ;  
 Nor such as useless conversation breeds,  
 Or lust engenders, and indulgence feeds.  
 Whence, and what are we ? to what end ordained ?  
 What means the drama by the world sustained ?  
 Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,  
 Divide the frail inhabitants of earth.  
 Is duty a mere sport, or an employ :  
 Life an intrusted talent, or a toy ?  
 Is there, as reason, conscience, Scripture, say  
 Cause to provide for a great future day,  
 When, earth's assigned duration at an end,  
 Man shall be summoned, and the dead attend ?  
 The trumpet—will it sound ? the curtain rise ?  
 And show the august tribunal of the skies ;  
 Where no prevarication shall avail,  
 Where eloquence and artifice shall fail,  
 The pride of arrogant distinctions fall,  
 And conscience and our conduct judge us all ?  
 Pardon me, ye that give the midnight oil  
 To learned cares, or philosophic toil,  
 Though I revere your honourable names,  
 Your useful labours and important aims,  
 And hold the world indebted to your aid,  
 Enriched with the discoveries ye have made ;  
 Yet let me stand excused, if I esteem  
 A mind employed on so sublime a theme,  
 Pushing her bold inquiry to the date  
 And outline of the present transient state,

And, after poisoning her adventurous wings,  
 Settling at last upon eternal things,  
 Far more intelligent, and better taught  
 The strenuous use of profitable thought,  
 Than ye, when happiest, and enlightened most,  
 And highest in renown, can justly boast.

A mind unnerved, or indisposed to bear  
 The weight of subjects worthiest of her care,  
 Whatever hopes a change of scene inspires,  
 Must change her nature, or in vain retires.  
 An idler is a watch, that wants both hands,  
 As useless if it goes, as when it stands.  
 Books therefore, not the scandal of the shelves,  
 In which lewd sensualists print out themselves ;  
 Nor those, in which the stage gives vice a blow,  
 With what success let modern manners show ;  
 Nor his, who, for the bane of thousands born,  
 Built God a church, and laughed his word to scorn,  
 Skilful alike to seem devout and just,  
 And stab religion with a sly side-thrust ;  
 Nor those of learned philologists, who chase  
 A panting syllable through time and space,  
 Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark,  
 To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark ;  
 But such as Learning without false pretence,  
 The friend of Truth, the associate of sound Sense,  
 And such as in the zeal of good design,  
 Strong judgment labouring in the Scripture mine,  
 All such as manly and great souls produce,  
 Worthy to live, and of eternal use :  
 Behold in these what leisure hours demand,  
 Amusement and true knowledge hand in hand.  
 Luxury gives the mind a childish cast,  
 And, while she polishes, perverts the taste ;

Habits of close attention, thinking heads,  
Become more rare as dissipation spreads,  
Till authors hear at length one general cry,—  
Tickle and entertain us, or we die.  
The loud demand, from year to year the same,  
Beggars Invention, and makes fancy lame  
Till Farce itself, most mournfully jejune,  
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune ;  
And novels (witness every month's review)  
Belie their name, and offer nothing new.  
The mind, relaxing into needful sport,  
Should turn to writers of an abler sort,  
Whose wit well managed, and whose classic style,  
Give truth a lustre, and make wisdom smile.  
Friends (for I cannot stint, as some have done,  
Too rigid in my view, that name to one ;  
Though one, I grant it, in the generous breast  
Will stand advanced a step above the rest :  
Flowers by that name promiscuously we call,  
But one, the rose, the regent of them all)—  
Friends, not adopted with a schoolboy's haste,  
But chosen with a nice discerning taste,  
Well-born, well-disciplined, who, placed apart  
From vulgar minds, have honour much at heart,  
And, though the world may think the ingredients odd,  
The love of virtue, and the fear of God !  
Such friends prevent what else would soon succeed,  
A temper rustic as the life we lead,  
And keep the polish of the manners clean  
As theirs who bustle in the busiest scene ;  
For solitude, however some may rave,  
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave,  
A sepulchre, in which the living lie,  
Where all good qualities grow sick and die.

I praise the Frenchman,\* his remark was shrewd—  
How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude !  
But grant me still a friend in my retreat,  
Whom I may whisper—solitude is sweet.  
Yet neither these delights, nor aught beside,  
That appetite can ask, or wealth provide,  
Can save us always from a tedious day,  
Or shine the dulness of still life away ;  
Divine communion, carefully enjoyed,  
Or sought with energy, must fill the void.  
O sacred art, to which alone life owes  
Its happiest seasons, and a peaceful close,  
Scorned in a world, indebted to that scorn  
For evils daily felt and hardly borne,  
Not knowing thee, we reap with bleeding hands  
Flowers of rank odour upon thorny lands,  
And, while Experience cautions us in vain,  
Grasp seeming happiness, and find it pain.  
Despondence, self-deserted in her grief,  
Lost by abandoning her own relief,  
Murmuring and ungrateful Discontent,  
That scorns afflictions mercifully meant,  
Those humours, tart as wines upon the fret,  
Which idleness and weariness beget ;  
These and a thousand plagues, that haunt the breast,  
Fond of the phantom of an earthly rest,  
Divine communion chases, as the day  
Drives to their dens the obedient beasts of prey.  
See Judah's promised king, bereft of all,  
Driven out an exile from the face of Saul,  
To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,  
To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.

Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice,  
 Hear him, o'erwhelmed with sorrow, yet rejoice ;  
 No womanish or wailing grief has part,  
 No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;  
 'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,  
 Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake ;  
 His soul exults, hope animates his lays  
 The sense of mercy kindles into praise,  
 And wilds, familiar with a lion's roar,  
 Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before :  
 'Tis love like his, that can alone defeat  
 The foes of man, or make a desert sweet.

Religion does not censure or exclude  
 Unnumbered pleasures harmlessly pursued ;  
 To study culture, and with artful toil  
 To meliorate and tame the stubborn soil ;  
 To give dissimilar yet fruitful lands  
 The grain, or herb, or plant that each demands ;  
 To cherish virtue in an humble state,  
 And share the joys your bounty may create ;  
 To mark the matchless workings of the power  
 That shuts within its seed the future flower,  
 Bids these in elegance of form excel,  
 In colour these, and those delight the smell,  
 Sends Nature forth the daughter of the skies,  
 To dance on earth, and charm all human eyes ;  
 To teach the canvass innocent deceit,  
 Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet—  
 These, these are arts pursued without a crime,  
 That leave no stain upon the wing of Time.

Me poetry (or rather notes that aim  
 Feebly and vainly at poetic fame)  
 Employs, shut out from more important views,  
 Fast by the banks of the slow-winding Ouse ;

Content if thus sequestered I may raise  
A monitor's, though not a poet's praise,  
And while I teach an art too little known,  
To close life wisely, may not waste my own.

**THE TASK:**

IN

**SIX BOOKS.**

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE history of the following production is briefly this: A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair—a Volume.

In the poem on the subject of Education, he would be very sorry to stand suspected of having aimed his censure at any particular school. His objections are such as naturally apply themselves to schools in general. If there were not, as for the most part there is, wilful neglect in those who manage them, and an omission even of such discipline as they are susceptible of, the objects are yet too numerous for minute attention; and the aching hearts of ten thousand parents, mourning under the bitterest of all disappointments, attest the truth of the allegation. His quarrel, therefore, is with the mischief at large, and not with any particular instance of it.



# THE TASK.

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## BOOK I.

### THE SOFA.

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#### *Argument of the First Book.*

Historical deduction of seats, from the stool to the Sofa.—A Schoolboy's ramble.—A walk in the country.—The scene described.—Rural sounds as well as sights delightful.—Another walk.—Mistake concerning the charms of solitude corrected.—Colonnades commended.—Alcove, and the view from it.—The wilderness.—The grove.—The thresher.—The necessity and the benefits of exercise.—The works of nature superior to, and in some instances inimitable by, art.—The wearisomeness of what is commonly called a life of pleasure.—Change of scene sometimes expedient.—A common described, and the character of crazy Kate introduced.—Gipsies.—The blessings of civilized life.—That state most favourable to virtue.—The South Sea islanders compassionated, but chiefly Omai. His present state of mind supposed.—Civilized life friendly to virtue, but not great cities.—Great cities, and London in particular, allowed their due praise, but censured.—Fete champêtre.—The book concludes with a reflection on the fatal effects of dissipation and effeminacy upon our public measures.

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I SING the SOFA, I, who lately sang  
Truth, Hope, and Charity,\* and touched with awe  
The solemn chords, and with a trembling hand,  
Escaped with pain from that adventurous flight,  
Now seek repose upon a humbler theme ;  
The theme though humble, yet august and proud  
The occasion—for the Fair commands the song.

Time was, when clothing sumptuous or for use,  
Save their own painted skins, our sires had none.

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\* See Poems, pages 112, 153, 176.

As yet black breeches were not ; satin smooth,  
Or velvet soft, or plush with shaggy pile :  
The hardy chief upon the rugged rock  
Washed by the sea, or on the gravelly bank  
Thrown up by wintry torrents roaring loud,  
Fearless of wrong, reposed his wearied strength.  
Those barbarous ages past, succeeded next  
The birth-day of Invention ; weak at first,  
Dull in design, and clumsy to perform.  
Joint-stools were then created ; on three legs  
Upborne they stood. Three legs upholding firm  
A massy slab, in fashion square or round.  
On such a stool immortal Alfred sat,  
And swayed the sceptre of his infant realms :  
And such in ancient halls and mansions drear  
May still be seen ; but perforated sore,  
And drilled in holes, the solid oak is found,  
By worms voracious eaten through and through.  
At length a generation more refined  
Improved the simple plan ; made three legs four,  
Gave them a twisted form vermicular,  
And o'er the seat, with plenteous wadding stuffed,  
Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,  
Yellow and red, of tapestry richly wrought  
And woven close, or needle work sublime.  
There might ye see the piony spread wide,  
The full-blown rose, the shepherd and his lass,  
Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes,  
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.

Now came the cane from India smooth and bright  
With nature's varnish ; severed into stripes,  
That interlaced each other, these supplied  
Of texture firm a lattice-work, that braced  
The new machine, and it became a chair.

But restless was the chair; the back erect  
Distressed the weary loins, that felt no ease;  
The slippery seat betrayed the sliding part  
That pressed it, and the feet hung dangling down,  
Anxious in vain to find the distant floor.  
These for the rich; the rest, whom Fate had placed  
In modest mediocrity, content  
With base materials, sat on well-tanned hides,  
Obdurate and unyielding, glassy smooth,  
With here and there a tuft of crimson yarn,  
Or scarlet crewel, in the cushion fixed,  
If cushion might be called, what harder seemed  
Than the firm oak, of which the frame was formed.  
No want of timber then was felt or feared  
In Albion's happy isle. The lumber stood  
Ponderous and fixed by its own massy weight.  
But elbows still were wanting: these, some say,  
An alderman of Cripplegate contrived;  
And some ascribe the invention to a priest,  
Burly, and big, and studious of his ease.  
But rude at first, and not with easy slope  
Receding wide, they pressed against the ribs,  
And bruised the side; and, elevated high,  
Taught the raised shoulders to invade the ears.  
Long time elapsed or e'er our rugged sires  
Complained, though incommodiously pent in,  
And ill at ease behind. The ladies first  
'Gan murmur, as became the softer sex.  
Ingenious Fancy, never better pleased,  
Than when employed to accommodate the fair,  
Heard the sweet moan with pity, and devised  
The soft settee; one elbow at each end,  
And in the midst an elbow it received,  
United yet divided, twain at once.

So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne ;  
 And so two citizens who take the air,  
 Close packed, and smiling in a chaise and one  
 But relaxation of the languid frame,  
 By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,  
 Was bliss reserved for happier days. So slow  
 The growth of what is excellent ; so hard  
 To attain perfection in this nether world.  
 Thus first Necessity invented stools,  
 Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,  
 And Luxury the accomplished SOFA last.

The nurse sleeps sweetly, hired to watch the sick,  
 Whom snoring she disturbs. As sweetly he,  
 Who quits the coach-box at the midnight hour,  
 To sleep within the carriage more secure,  
 His legs depending at the open door.  
 Sweet sleep enjoys the curate in his desk,  
 The tedious rector drawling o'er his head ;  
 And sweet the clerk below. But neither sleep  
 Of lazy nurse, who snores the sick man dead ;  
 Nor his who quits the box at midnight hour,  
 To slumber in the carriage more secure ;  
 Nor sleep enjoyed by curate in his desk ;  
 Nor yet the dozings of the clerk, are sweet,  
 Compared with the repose the SOFA yields.

O may I live exempted (while I live  
 Guiltless of pampered appetite obscene)  
 From pangs arthritic, that infest the toe  
 Of libertine Excess. The SOFA suits  
 The gouty limb, 'tis true ; but gouty limb  
 Though on a SOFA, may I never feel :  
 For I have loved the rural walk through lanes  
 Of grassy swarth, close cropped by nibbling sheep,  
 And skirted thick with intertexture firm

Of thorny boughs; have loved the rural walk  
O'er hills, through valleys, and by river's brink,  
E'er since a truant boy I passed my bounds,  
To enjoy a ramble on the banks of Thames;  
And still remember, nor without regret,  
Of hours, that sorrow since has much endeared,  
How oft, my slice of pocket store consumed,  
Still hungering, pennyless, and far from home,  
I fed on scarlet hips and stony haws,  
Or blushing crabs, or berries, that emboss  
The bramble, black as jet, or sloes austere.  
Hard fare! but such as boyish appetite  
Disdains not; nor the palate, undepraved  
By culinary arts, unsavoury deems.  
No SOFA then awaited my return;  
Nor SOFA then I needed. Youth repairs  
His wasted spirits quickly, by long toil  
Incurring short fatigue; and, though our years,  
As life declines, speed rapidly away  
And not a year but pilfers as he goes  
Some youthful grace, that age would gladly keep;  
A tooth or auburn lock, and by degrees  
Their length and colour from the locks they spare;  
The elastic spring of an unwearied foot,  
That mounts the stile with ease, or leaps the fence,  
That play of lungs, inhaling and again  
Respiring freely the fresh air, that makes  
Swift pace or steep ascent no toil to me,  
Mine have not pilfered yet; nor yet impaired  
My relish of fair prospect: scenes that soothed  
Or charmed me young, no longer young, I find  
Still soothing, and of power to charm me still.  
And witness, dear companion of my walks,  
Whose arm this twentieth winter I perceive

Fast locked in mine, with pleasure such as love,  
Confirmed by long experience of thy worth  
And well-tried virtues, could alone inspire—  
Witness a joy that thou hast doubled long.  
Thou knowest my praise of nature most sincere,  
And that my raptures are not conjured up  
To serve occasions of poetic pomp,  
But genuine, and art partner of them all.  
How oft upon yon eminence our pace  
Has slackened to a pause, and we have borne  
The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew,  
While Admiration, feeding at the eye,  
And still unsated, dwelt upon the scene.  
Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned  
The distant plough slow moving, and beside  
His labouring team, that swerved not from the track,  
The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!  
Here Ouse, slow-winding through a level plain  
Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,  
Conducts the eye along his sinuous course  
Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,  
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms,  
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;  
While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,  
That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,  
The sloping land recedes into the clouds;  
Displaying on its varied side the grace  
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,  
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells  
Just undulates upon the listening ear,  
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages remote.  
Scenes must be beautiful, which daily viewed  
Please daily, and whose novelty survives  
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years:  
Praise justly due to those that I describe.

Nor rural sights alone, but rural sounds,  
Exhilarate the spirit, and restore  
The tone of languid nature. Mighty winds,  
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood  
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike  
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,  
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind ;  
Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,  
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.  
Nor less composure waits upon the roar  
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice  
Of neighbouring fountain, or of rills that slip  
Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall  
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length  
In matted grass, that with a livelier green  
Betrays the secret of their silent course.  
Nature inanimate employs sweet sounds,  
But animated Nature sweeter still,  
To soothe and satisfy the human ear.  
Ten thousand warblers cheer the day, and one  
The livelong night ; nor these alone, whose notes  
Nice-fingered Art must emulate in vain,  
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime  
In still repeated circles, screaming loud,  
The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,  
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me.  
Sounds inharmonious in themselves and harsh,  
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,  
And only there, please highly for their sake.

Peace to the artist whose ingenious thought  
Devised the weather-house, that useful toy !  
Fearless of humid air and gathering rains,  
Forth steps the man—an emblem of myself !  
More delicate his timorous mate retires.

When Winter soaks the fields, and female feet,  
Too weak to struggle with tenacious clay,  
Or ford the rivulets, are best at home,  
The task of new discoveries falls on me.—  
At such a season, and with such a charge,  
Once went I forth; and found, till then unknown,  
A cottage, whither oft we since repair:  
'Tis perched upon the green hill top, but close  
Environed with a ring of branching elms,  
That overhang the thatch, itself unseen  
Peeps at the vale below; so thick beset  
With foliage of such dark redundant growth,  
I called the low-roofed lodge the *peasant's nest*.  
And, hidden as it is, and far remote  
From such unpleasing sounds, as haunt the ear  
In village or in town, the bay of curs  
Incessant, clinking hammers, grinding wheels,  
And infants clamorous, whether pleased or pained,  
Oft have I wished the peaceful covert mine.  
Here, I have said, at least I should possess  
The poet's treasure, silence; and indulge  
The dreams of fancy, tranquil and secure.  
Vain thought! the dweller in that still retreat  
Dearly obtains the refuge it affords.  
Its elevated sight forbids the wretch  
To drink sweet waters of the crystal well;  
He dips his bowl into the weedy ditch,  
And, heavy laden brings his beverage home,  
Far fetched and little worth; nor seldom waits,  
Dependant on the baker's punctual call,  
To hear his creaking panniers at the door,  
Angry and sad, and his last crust consumed.  
So farewell envy of the *peasant's nest*!  
If solitude make scant the means of life,



Society for me!—thou seeming sweet,  
 Be still a pleasing object in my view;  
 My visit still, but never mine abode.

Not distant far, a length of colonnade  
 Invites us. Monument of ancient taste,  
 Now scorned, but worthy of a better fate.  
 Our fathers knew the value of a screen  
 From sultry suns: and, in their shaded walks  
 And long protracted bowers, enjoyed at noon  
 The gloom and coolness of declining day.  
 We bear our shades about us; self-deprived  
 Of other screen, the thin umbrella spread,  
 And range an Indian waste without a tree.  
 Thanks to Benevolus\*—he spares me yet  
 These chesnuts ranged in corresponding lines;  
 And, though himself so polished, still reprieves  
 The obsolete prolixity of shade.

Descending now (but cautious, lest too fast)  
 A sudden steep, upon a rustic bridge  
 We pass a gulf, in which the willows dip  
 Their pendent boughs, stooping as if to drink.  
 Hence, ancle deep in moss and flowery thyme,  
 We mount again, and feel at every step  
 Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,  
 Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil.  
 He, not unlike the great ones of mankind,  
 Disfigures Earth; and, plotting in the dark,  
 Foils much to earn a monumental pile,  
 That may record the mischiefs he has done.

The summit gained, behold the proud alcove  
 That crowns it! yet not all its pride secures  
 The grand retreat from injuries impressed

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\* John Courtney Throckmorton, Esq. of Weston-Underwood.

By rural carvers, who with knives deface  
The pannels, leaving an obscure, rude name,  
In characters uncouth, and spelt amiss.  
So strong the zeal to immortalize himself  
Beats in the breast of man, that e'en a few,  
Few transient years, won from the abyss abhorred  
Of blank oblivion seem a glorious prize,  
And even to a clown. Now roves the eye ;  
And, posted on this speculative height,  
Exults in its command. The sheepfold here  
Pours out its fleecy tenants o'er the glebe.  
At first, progressive as a stream, they seek  
The middle field ; but, scattered by degrees,  
Each to his choice, soon whiten all the land.  
There from the sun-burnt hay-field homeward creeps  
The loaded wain ; while, lightened of his charge,  
The wain that meets it passes swiftly by ;  
The boorish driver leaning o'er his team  
Vociferous, and impatient of delay.  
Nor less attractive is the woodland scene,  
Diversified with trees of every growth,  
Alike, yet various. Here the gray smooth trunks  
Of ash, or lime, or beech, distinctly shine  
Within the twilight of their distant shades ;  
There, lost behind a rising ground, the wood  
Seems sunk, and shortened to its topmost boughs.  
No tree in all the grove but has its charms,  
Though each its hue peculiar ; paler some,  
And of a wannish gray ; the willow such,  
And poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,  
And ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm ;  
Of deeper green the elm ; and deeper still,  
Lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak.  
Some glossy-leaved, and shining in the sun,

The maple, and the beech of oily nuts  
Prolific, and the lime at dewy eve  
Diffusing odours ; nor unnoted pass  
The sycamore, capricious in attire,  
Now green, now tawny, and ere autumn yet  
Have changed the woods, in scarlet honours bright.  
O'er these, but far beyond (a spacious map  
Of hill and valley interposed between,)  
The Ouse, dividing the well-watered land,  
Now glitters in the sun, and now retires,  
As bashful, yet impatient to be seen.  
Hence the declivity is sharp and short,  
And such the re-ascent ; between them weeps  
A little naiad her impoverished urn  
All summer long, which winter fills again.  
The folded gates would bar my progress now,  
But that the lord\* of this enclosed demesne,  
Communicative of the good he owns,  
Admits me to a share ; the guiltless eye  
Commits no wrong, nor wastes what it enjoys.  
Refreshing change ! where now the blazing sun ?  
By short transition we have lost his glare,  
And stepped at once into a cooler clime.  
Ye fallen avenues ! once more I mourn  
Your fate unmerited, once more rejoice  
That yet a remnant of your race survives.  
How airy and how light the graceful arch,  
Yet awful as the consecrated roof  
Re-echoing pious anthems ! while beneath  
The checkered earth seems restless as a flood  
Brushed by the wind. So sportive is the light  
Shot through the boughs, it dances as they dance,

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\* See the foregoing note.

Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,  
And darkening and enlightening, as the leaves  
Play wanton, every moment, every spot.

And now, with nerves new-braced and spirits  
cheered,

We tread the wilderness, whose well-rolled walks,  
With curvature of slow and easy sweep—  
Deception innocent—give ample space  
To narrow bounds. The grove receives us next ;  
Between the upright shafts of whose talls elms  
We may discern the thresher at his task.  
Thump after thump resounds the constant flail,  
That seems to swing uncertain, and yet falls  
Full on the destined ear. Wide flies the chaff,  
The rustling straw sends up a frequent mist  
Of atoms sparkling in the noonday beam.  
Come hither, ye that press your beds of down,  
And sleep not ; see him sweating o'er his bread  
Before he eats it. 'Tis the primal curse,  
But softened into mercy ; made the pledge  
Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

By ceaseless action all that is subsists.  
Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel,  
That Nature rides upon, maintains her health,  
Her beauty, her fertility. She dreads  
An instant's pause, and lives but while she moves ;  
Its own revolvency upholds the world.  
Winds from all quarters agitate the air,  
And fit the limpid element for use,  
Else noxious ; oceans, rivers, lakes, and streams,  
All feel the freshening impulse, and are cleansed  
By restless undulation : e'en the oak  
Thrives by the rude concussion of the storm :  
He seems indeed indignant, and to feel

The impression of the blast with proud disdain,  
Frowning, as if in his unconscious arm  
He held the thunder : but the monarch owes  
His firm stability to what he scorns,  
More fixed below, the more disturbed above.  
The law, by which all creatures else are bound,  
Binds man, the lord of all. Himself derives  
No mean advantage from a kindred cause,  
From strenuous toil his hours of sweetest ease.  
The sedentary stretch their lazy length  
When Custom bids, but no refreshment find,  
For none they need : the languid eye, the cheek  
Deserted of its bloom, the flaccid, shrunk,  
And withered muscle, and the vapid soul,  
Reproach their owner with that love of rest,  
To which he forfeits e'en the rest he loves.  
Not such the alert and active. Measure life  
By its true worth, the comfort it affords,  
And theirs alone seems worthy of the name.  
Good health, and, its associate in the most,  
Good temper ; spirits prompt to undertake,  
And not soon spent, though in an arduous task ;  
The powers of fancy and strong thought are theirs ;  
E'en age itself seems privileged in them  
With clear exemption from its own defects.  
A sparkling eye beneath a wrinkled front  
The veteran shows, and, gracing a gray beard  
With youthful smiles, descends toward the grave  
Sprightly and old almost without decay.

Like a coy maiden, Ease, when courted most,  
Farthest retires—an idol, at whose shrine  
Who oftenest sacrifice are favoured least.  
The love of Nature, and the scenes she draws,  
Is Nature's dictate. Strange ! there should be found,

Who, self-imprisoned in their proud saloons,  
Renounce the odours of the open field  
For the unscented fictions of the loom ;  
Who, satisfied with only pencilled scenes,  
Prefer to the performance of a God  
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand !  
Lovely indeed the mimic works of Art ;  
But nature's works far lovelier. I admire,  
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,  
Who shows me that which I shall never see,  
Conveys a distant country into mine,  
And throws Italian light on English walls :  
But imitative strokes can do no more  
Than please the eye—sweet Nature's every sense.  
The air salubrious of her lofty hills,  
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,  
And music of her woods—no works of man  
May rival these, these all bespeak a power  
Peculiar, and exclusively her own.  
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast ;  
'Tis free to all—'tis every day renewed ;  
Who scorns it starves deservedly at home.  
He does not scorn it, who, imprisoned long  
In some unwholesome dungeon, and a prey  
To sallow sickness, which the vapours, dank  
And clammy, of his dark abode have bred,  
Escapes at last to liberty and light :  
His cheek recovers soon its healthful hue ;  
His eye relumines its extinguished fires ;  
He walks, he leaps, he runs—is winged with joy,  
And riots in the sweets of every breeze.  
He does not scorn it, who has long endured  
A fever's agonies, and fed on drugs.  
Nor yet the mariner, his blood inflamed

With acrid salts : his very heart athirst,  
To gaze at Nature in her green array.  
Upon the ship's tall side he stands, possessed  
With visions prompted by intense desire :  
Fair fields appear below, such as he left  
Far distant, such as he would die to find—  
He seeks them headlong, and is seen no more.

The spleen is seldom felt where Flora reigns ;  
The lowering eye, the petulance, the frown,  
And sullen sadness, that o'ershade, distort,  
And mar the face of beauty, when no cause  
For such immeasurable woe appears ;  
These Flora banishes, and gives the fair  
Sweet smiles, and bloom less transient than her own.  
It is the constant revolution, stale  
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,  
That palls and satiates, and makes languid life  
A pedlar's pack, that bows the bearer down.  
Health suffers, and the spirits ebb, the heart  
Recoils from its own choice—at the full feast  
Is famished—finds no music in the song,  
No smartness in the jest ; and wonders why.  
Yet thousands still desire to journey on,  
Though halt, and weary of the path they tread.  
The paralytic, who can hold the cards,  
But cannot play them, borrows a friend's hand  
To deal and shuffle, to divide and sort  
Her mingled suits and sequences ; and sits,  
Spectatress both and spectacle, a sad  
And silent cipher, while her proxy plays.  
Others are dragged into the crowded room  
Between supporters ; and, once seated, sit,  
Through downright inability to rise,  
Till the stout bearers lift the corpse again.

These speak a loud memento. Yet e'en these  
Themselves love life, and cling to it, as he,  
That overhangs a torrent, to a twig.  
They love it, and yet loathe it; fear to die,  
Yet scorn the purposes for which they live.  
Then wherefore not renounce them? No—the dread,  
The slavish dread of solitude, that breeds  
Reflection and remorse, the fear of shame,  
And their inveterate habits, all forbid.

Whom call we gay? That honour has been long  
The boast of mere pretenders to the name.  
The innocent are gay—the lark is gay,  
That dries his feathers, saturate with dew,  
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams  
Of dayspring overshoot his humble nest  
The peasant too, a witness of his song,  
Himself a songster, is as gay as he.  
But save me from the gaiety of those,  
Whose headachs nail them to a noonday bed;  
And save me too from theirs, whose haggard eyes  
Flash desperation, and betray their pangs  
For property stripped off by cruel chance;  
From gaiety, that fills the bones with pain,  
The mouth with blasphemy, the heart with woe.

The Earth was made so various, that the mind  
Of desultory man, studious of change,  
And pleased with novelty, might be indulged.  
Prospects however lovely, may be seen  
Till half their beauties fade; the weary sight,  
Too well acquainted with their smiles, slides off  
Fastidious, seeking less familiar scenes.  
Then snug enclosures in the sheltered vale,  
Where frequent hedges intercept the eye,  
Delight us; happy to renounce awhile,



Not senseless of its charms, what still we love,  
That such short absence may endear it more.  
Then forests, or the savage rock, may please,  
That hides the sea-mew in his hollow clefts  
Above the reach of man. His hoary head,  
Conspicuous many a league, the mariner  
Bound homeward, and in hope already there,  
Greets with three cheers exulting. At his waist,  
A girdle of half-withered shrubs he shows,  
And at his feet the baffled billows die.

The common, overgrown with fern, and rough  
With prickly gorse, that, shapeless and deformed,  
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,  
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,  
Yields no unpleasing ramble; there the turf  
Smells fresh, and, rich in odoriferous herbs  
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense  
With luxury of unexpected sweets.

There often wanders one, whom better days  
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimmed  
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.  
A serving maid was she, and fell in love  
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.  
Her fancy followed him through foaming waves  
To distant shores; and she would sit and weep  
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,  
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,  
Would oft anticipate his glad return,  
And dream of transports she was not to know.  
She heard the doleful tidings of his death—  
And never smiled again! and now she roams  
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day  
And there, unless when charity forbids,  
The livelong night. A tattered apron hides,

Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown  
More tattered still ; and both but ill conceal  
A bosom heaved with never ceasing sighs.  
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,  
And hoards them in her sleeve ; but needful food,  
Though pressed with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,  
Though pinched with cold, asks never.—Kate is crazed.

I see a column of slow-rising smoke  
O'ertop the lofty wood that skirts the wild.  
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat  
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung  
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,  
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,  
Or vermin, or at best of cock purloined  
From his accustomed perch. Hard faring race !  
They pick their fuel out of every hedge,  
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquenched  
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide  
Their fluttering rags, and shows a tawney skin,  
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.  
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more  
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,  
Conveying worthless dross into its place ;  
Loud when they beg, dumb only when they steal.  
Strange ! that a creature rational, and cast  
In human mould, should brutalize by choice  
His nature ; and, though capable of arts,  
By which the world might profit, and himself  
Self-banished from society, prefer  
Such squalid sloth to honourable toil !  
Yet even these, though feigning sickness oft  
They swathe the forehead, drag the limping limb,  
And vex their flesh with artificial sores,  
Can change their whine into a mirthful note,

When safe occasion offers ; and with dance,  
And music of the bladder and the bag,  
Beguile their woes, and make the woods resound.  
Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy  
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;  
And, breathing wholesome air, and wandering much,  
Need other physic none to heal th' effects  
Of loathsome diet, penury, and cold.

Blest he, though undistinguished from the crowd  
By wealth or dignity, who dwells secure,  
Where man, by nature fierce, has laid aside  
His fierceness, having learnt, though slow to learn,  
The manners and the arts of civil life.  
His wants indeed are many ; but supply  
Is obvious, placed within the easy reach  
Of temperate wishes and industrious hands.  
Here virtue thrives as in her proper soil ;  
Not rude and surly, and beset with thorns ;  
And terrible to sight, as when she springs  
(If e'er she springs spontaneous) in remote  
And barbarous climes, where violence prevails,  
And strength is lord of all ; but gentle, kind,  
By culture tamed, by liberty refreshed,  
And all her fruits by radiant truth matured.  
War and the chase engross the savage whole ;  
War followed for revenge, or to supplant  
The envied tenants of some happier spot :  
The chase for sustenance, precarious trust !  
His hard condition with severe constraint  
Binds all his faculties, forbids all growth  
Of wisdom, proves a school, in which he learns  
Sly circumvention, unrelenting hate,  
Mean self-attachment, and scarce aught beside.  
Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,

And thus the rangers of the western world,  
Where it advances far into the deep,  
Towards the antarctic. Even the favoured isles  
So lately found, although the constant sun  
Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,  
Can boast but little virtue; and inert  
Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain  
In manners—victims of luxurious ease.  
These therefore I can pity, placed remote  
From all that science traces, art invents,  
Or inspiration teaches; and enclosed  
In boundless oceans, never to be passed  
By navigators uninformed as they,  
Or ploughed perhaps by British bark again:  
But far beyond the rest, and with most cause,  
Thee, gentle savage!\* whom no love of thee  
Or thine, but curiosity perhaps,  
Or else vain glory, prompted us to draw  
Forth from thy native bowers, to show thee here  
With what superior skill we can abuse  
The gifts of Providence, and squander life.  
The dream is past; and thou hast found again  
Thy cocoas and bananas, palms and yams,  
And homestall thatched with leaves. But hast thou  
found  
Their former charms? And, having seen our state,  
Our palaces, our ladies, and our pomp  
Of equipage, our gardens, and our sports,  
And heard our music; are thy simple friends,  
Thy simple fare, and all thy plain delights,  
As dear to thee as once? And have thy joys  
Lost nothing by comparison with ours?

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\* Omai.

Rude as thou art (for we returned thee rude  
And ignorant, except of outward show)  
I cannot think thee yet so dull of heart  
And spiritless, as never to regret  
Sweets tasted here, and left as soon as known.  
Methinks I see thee straying on the beach,  
And asking of the surge, that bathes thy foot,  
If ever it has washed our distant shore.  
I see thee weep, and thine are honest tears,  
A patriot's for his country: thou art sad  
At thought of her forlorn and abject state,  
From which no power of thine can raise her up.  
Thus Fancy paints thee, and, though apt to err,  
Perhaps errs little, when she paints thee thus.  
She tells me too, that duly every morn  
Thou climb'st the mountain top, with eager eye  
Exploring far and wide the watery waste  
For sight of ship from England. Every speck  
Seen in the dim horizon turns thee pale  
With conflict of contending hopes and fears.  
But comes at last the dull and dusky eve,  
And sends thee to thy cabin, well prepared  
To dream all night of what the day denied.  
Alas! expect it not. We found no bait  
To tempt us in thy country. Doing good,  
Disinterested good, is not our trade.  
We travel far, 'tis true, but not for nought;  
And must be bribed to compass Earth again  
By other hopes and richer fruits than yours.  
But though true worth and virtue in the mild  
And genial soil of cultivated life  
Thrive most, and may perhaps thrive only there,  
Yet not in cities oft: in proud, and gay,  
And gain-devoted cities. Thither flow,

As to a common and most noisome sewer,  
The dregs and feculence of every land.  
In cities foul example on most minds  
Begets its likeness. Rank abundance breeds,  
In gross and pampered cities, sloth, and lust,  
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.  
In cities vice is hidden with most ease,  
Or seen with least reproach ; and virtue, taught  
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there  
Beyond th' achievement of successful flight.  
I do confess them nurseries of the arts,  
In which they flourish most ; where, in the beams  
Of warm encouragement, and in the eye  
Of public note, they reach their perfect size.  
Such London is, by taste and wealth proclaimed  
The fairest capital of all the world,  
By riot and incontinence the worst.  
There, touched by Reynolds, a dull blank becomes  
A lucid mirror, in which Nature sees  
All her reflected features. Bacon there  
Gives more than female beauty to a stone,  
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips.  
Nor does the chisel occupy alone  
The powers of sculpture, but the style as much ;  
Each province of her art her equal care.  
With nice incision of her guided steel  
She ploughs a brazen field, and clothes a soil  
So sterile with what charms so'er she will,  
The richest scenery and the loveliest forms.  
Where finds Philosophy her eagle eye,  
With which she gazes at yon burning disk  
Undazzled, and detects and counts his spots?  
In London. Where her implements exact,  
With which she calculates, computes, and scans,

All distance, motion, magnitude, and now  
Measures an atom, and now girds a world?  
In London. Where has commerce such a mart,  
So rich, so thronged, so drained, and so supplied,  
As London—opulent, enlarged, and still  
Increasing, London? Babylon of old  
Not more the glory of the earth than she,  
A more accomplished world's chief glory now.

She has her praise. Now mark a spot or two,  
That so much beauty would do well to purge;  
And show this queen of cities, that so fair  
May yet be foul; so witty, yet not wise.  
It is not seemly, nor of good report,  
That she is slack in discipline; more prompt  
T' avenge than to prevent the breach of law:  
That she is rigid in denouncing death  
On petty robbers, and indulges life  
And liberty, and oftentimes honour too,  
To speculators of the public gold:  
That thieves at home must hang; but he, that puts  
Into his overgorged and bloated purse  
The wealth of Indian provinces, escapes.  
Nor is it well, nor can it come to good,  
That, through profane and infidel contempt  
Of holy writ, she has presumed t' annul  
And abrogate, as roundly as she may,  
The total ordinance and will of God;  
Advancing Fashion to the post of Truth,  
And centering all authority in modes  
And customs of her own, till Sabbath rites  
Have dwindled into unrespected forms,  
And knees and hassocks are well-nigh divorced.

God made the country, and man made the town.  
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts

That can alone make sweet the bitter draught  
That life holds out to all, should most abound  
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?  
Possess ye therefore, ye who, borne about  
In chariots and sedans, know no fatigue  
But that of idleness, and taste no scenes  
But such as art contrives, possess ye still  
Your element; there only can ye shine;  
There only minds like yours can do no harm.  
Our groves were planted to console at noon  
The pensive wanderer in their shades. At eve  
The moon-beam, sliding softly in between  
The sleeping leaves, is all the light they wish,  
Birds warbling all the music. We can spare  
The splendour of your lamps; they but eclipse  
Our softer satellite. Your songs confound  
Our more harmonious notes: the thrush departs  
Scared, and th' offended nightingale is mute.  
There is a public mischief in your mirth;  
It plagues your country. Folly such as yours,  
Graced with a sword, and worthier of a fan,  
Has made, what enemies could ne'er have done,  
Our arch of empire, steadfast but for you,  
A mutilated structure, soon to fall.



# THE TASK.

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## BOOK II.

### THE TIME-PIECE.

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#### *Argument of the Second Book.*

Reflections suggested by the conclusion of the former book.—Peace among the nations recommended, on the ground of their common fellowship in sorrow.—Prodigies enumerated.—Sicilian earthquakes.—Man rendered obnoxious to these calamities by sin.—God the agent in them.—The philosophy that stops at secondary causes reproved.—Our own late miscarriages accounted for.—Satirical notice taken of our trips to Fontaine-Bleau.—But the pulpit, not satire, the proper engine of reformation.—The Reverend Advertiser of engraved sermons.—Petit-maitre parson.—The good preacher.—Picture of a theatrical clerical coxcomb.—Story-tellers and jesters in the pulpit reproved.—Apostrophe to popular applause.—Retailers of ancient philosophy expostulated with.—Sum of the whole matter.—Effects of sacerdotal mismanagement on the laity.—Their folly and extravagance.—The mischiefs of profusion.—Profusion itself, with all its consequent evils, ascribed, as to its principal cause, to the want of discipline in the universities.

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O FOR a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,  
Of unsuccessful or successful war,  
Might never reach me more. My ear is pained,  
My soul is sick with every day's report  
Of wrong and outrage with which Earth is filled.  
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,  
It does not feel for man; the natural bond  
Of brotherhood is severed as the flax,  
That falls asunder' at the touch of fire.

He finds his fellow guilty of a skin  
Not coloured like his own; and having power  
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause  
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.  
Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed  
Make enemies of nations, who had else  
Like kindred drops been mingled into one.  
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;  
And, worse than all, and most to be deplored  
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
With stripes, that Mercy with a bleeding heart  
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.  
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,  
And having human feelings, does not blush,  
And hang his head, to think himself a man?  
I would not have a slave to till my ground,  
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,  
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth  
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned.  
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's  
Just estimation prized above all price,  
I had much rather be myself the slave,  
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.  
We have no slaves at home—then why abroad?  
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave  
That parts us, are emancipate and loosed.  
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs  
Receive our air, that moment they are free;  
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.  
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud  
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,  
And let it circulate through every vein

Of all your empire; that, where Britain's power  
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.

Sure there is need of social-intercourse,  
Benevolence, and peace, and mutual aid,  
Between the nations in a world, that seems  
To toll the deathbell of its own decease,  
And by the voice of all its elements  
To preach the general doom.\* When were the winds  
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?  
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap  
Their ancient barriers, deluging the dry?  
Fires from beneath, and meteors† from above,  
Portentous, unexampled, unexplained,  
Have kindled beacons in the skies; and th' old  
And crazy Earth has had her shaking fits  
More frequent, and foregone her usual rest.  
Is it a time to wrangle, when the props  
And pillars of our planet seem to fail,  
And Nature‡ with a dim and sickly eye  
To wait the close of all? But grant her end  
More distant, and that prophecy demands  
A longer respite, unaccomplished yet;  
Still they are frowning signals, and bespeak  
Displeasure in His breast, who smites the Earth  
Or heals it, makes it languish or rejoice.  
And 'tis but seemly, that, where all deserve  
And stand exposed by common peccancy  
To what no few have felt, there should be peace,  
And brethren in calamity should love.;

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\* Alluding to the calamities in Jamaica.

† August 18, 1783.

‡ Alluding to the fog, that covered both Europe and Asia during the whole summer of 1783.

Alas for Sicily ! rude fragments now  
Lie scattered, where the shapely column stood.  
Her palaces are dust. In all her streets  
The voice of singing and the sprightly chord  
Are silent. Revelry, and dance, and show,  
Suffer a syncope and solemn pause ;  
While God performs upon the trembling stage  
Of his own works his dreadful part alone.  
How does the Earth receive him ?—with what signs  
Of gratulation and delight her King ?  
Pours she not all her choicest fruits abroad,  
Her sweetest flowers, her aromatic gums,  
Disclosing Paradise where'er he treads ?  
She quakes at his approach. Her hollow womb,  
Conceiving thunders, through a thousand deeps  
And fiery caverns, roars beneath his foot.  
The hills move lightly, and the mountains smoke,  
For he has touched them. From th' extremest point  
Of elevation down into the abyss  
His wrath is busy, and his frown is felt.  
The rocks fall headlong, and the valleys rise,  
The rivers die into offensive pools,  
And, charged with putrid verdure, breathe a gross  
And mortal nuisance into all the air.  
What solid was, by transformation strange,  
Grows fluid ; and the fixed and rooted earth,  
Tormented into billows, heaves and swells,  
Or with vortiginous and hideous whirl  
Sucks down its prey insatiable. Immense  
The tumult and the overthrow, the pangs  
And agonies of human and of brute  
Multitudes, fugitive on every side,  
And fugitive in vain. The sylvan scene  
Migrates uplifted ; and, with all its soil

Alighting in far distant fields, finds out  
A new possessor, and survives the change.  
Ocean has caught the frenzy, and upwrought  
To an enormous and o'erbearing height,  
Not by a mighty wind, but by that voice  
Which winds and waves obey, invades the shore  
Resistless. Never such a sudden flood,  
Upridged so high, and sent on such a charge,  
Possessed an inland scene. Where now the throng  
That pressed the beach, and, hasty to depart,  
Looked to the sea for safety? They are gone,  
Gone with the refluent wave into the deep—  
A prince with half his people! Ancient towers,  
And roofs embattled high, the gloomy scenes,  
Where beauty oft and lettered worth consume  
Life in the unproductive shades of death,  
Fall prone: the pale inhabitants come forth,  
And, happy in their unforeseen release  
From all the rigours of restraint, enjoy  
The terrors of the day that sets them free.  
Who then, that has thee, would not hold thee fast,  
Freedom? whom they that lose thee so regret,  
That e'en a judgment, making way for thee,  
Seems in their eyes a mercy for thy sake?

Such evils Sin hath wrought; and such a flame  
Kindled in Heaven, that it burns down to Earth,  
And in the furious inquest, that it makes  
On God's behalf, lays waste his fairest works.  
The very elements, though each be meant  
The minister of man, to serve his wants,  
Conspire against him. With his breath he draws  
A plague into his blood: and cannot use  
Life's necessary means, but he must die.  
Storms rise t' o'erwhelm him: or, if stormy winds

Rise not, the waters of the deep shall rise,  
And, needing none assistance of the storm,  
Shall roll themselves ashore, and reach him there.  
The earth shall shake him out of all his holds,  
Or make his house his grave: nor so content,  
Shall counterfeit the motions of the flood,  
And drown him in her dry and dusty gulfs.  
What then!—were they the wicked above all,  
And we the righteous, whose fast-anchored isle  
Moved not, while theirs was rocked, like a light skiff,  
The sport of every wave? No: none are clear,  
And none than we more guilty. But, where all  
Stand chargeable with guilt, and to the shafts  
Of wrath obnoxious, God may choose his mark:  
May punish, if he please, the less, to warn  
The more malignant. If he spared not them,  
Tremble and be amazed at thine escape,  
Far guiltier England, lest he spare not thee!

Happy the man, who sees a God employed  
In all the good and ill that checker life!  
Resolving all events, with their effects  
And manifold results, into the will  
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.  
Did not his eye rule all things, and intend  
The least of our concerns, (since from the least  
The greatest oft originate) could chance  
Find place in his dominion, or dispose  
One lawless particle to thwart his plan;  
Then God might be surprised, and unforeseen  
Contingence might alarm him, and disturb  
The smooth and equal course of his affairs.  
This truth Philosophy, though eagle-eyed  
In nature's tendencies, oft overlooks;  
And, having found his instrument, forgets,

Or disregards, or, more presumptuous still,  
Denies the power that wields it. God proclaims  
His hot displeasure against foolish men,  
That live an Atheist life : involves the Heavens  
In tempests ; quits his grasp upon the winds,  
And gives them all their fury ; bids the plague  
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,  
And putrefy the breath of blooming Health.  
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend  
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,  
And taints the golden ear. He springs his mines,  
And desolates a nation at a blast.  
Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells  
Of homogeneal and discordant springs  
And principles ; of causes, how they work  
By necessary laws their sure effects ;  
Of action and reaction : he has found  
The source of the disease, that nature feels,  
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.  
Thou fool ! will thy discovery of the cause  
Suspend the effect or heal it ? Has not God  
Still wrought by means since first he made the world ?  
And did he not of old employ his means  
To drown it ? What is his creation less  
Than a capacious reservoir of means  
Formed for his use, and ready at his will ?  
Go, dress thine eyes with eye-salve ; ask of him,  
Or ask of whomsoever he has taught ;  
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

England, with all thy faults, I love thee still—  
My country ! and while yet a nook is left,  
Where English minds and manners may be found,  
Shall be constrained to love thee. Though thy clime  
Be fickle, and thy year most part deformed

With dripping rains, or withered by a frost,  
I would not yet exchange thy sullen skies,  
And fields without a flower, for warmer France  
With all her vines ; nor for Ausonia's groves  
Of golden fruitage, and her myrtle bowers.  
To shake thy senate, and from heights sublime  
Of patriot eloquence to flash down fire  
Upon thy foes, was never meant my task :  
But I can feel thy fortunes, and partake  
Thy joys and sorrows, with as true a heart  
As any thunderer there. And I can feel  
Thy follies too ; and with a just disdain  
Frown at effeminates, whose very looks  
Reflect dishonour on the land I love.  
How in the name of soldiership and sense,  
Should England prosper, when such things, as smooth  
And tender as a girl, all essenced o'er  
With odours, and as profligate as sweet ;  
Who sell their laurel for a myrtle wreath,  
And love when they should fight ; when such as these  
Presume to lay their hand upon the ark  
Of her magnificent and awful cause ?  
Time was when it was praise and boast enough  
In every clime, and travel where we might,  
That we were born her children. Praise enough  
To fill the ambition of a private man,  
That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,  
And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.  
Farewell those honours, and farewell with them  
The hope of such hereafter ! They have fallen  
Each in his field of glory ; one in arms,  
And one in council—Wolfe upon the lap  
Of smiling Victory that moment won,  
And Chatham heart-sick of his country's shame !



They made us many soldiers. Chatham, still  
Consulting England's happiness at home,  
Secured it by an unforgiving frown,  
If any wronged her. Wolfe, where'er he fought,  
Put so much of his heart into his act,  
That his example had a magnet's force,  
And all were swift to follow whom all loved.  
Those suns are set. O rise some other such !  
Or all that we have left is empty talk  
Of old achievements, and despair of new,

Now hoist the sail, and let the streamers float  
Upon the wanton breezes. Strew the deck  
With lavender, and sprinkle liquid sweets,  
That no rude savour maritime invade  
The nose of nice nobility ! Breathe soft  
Ye clarionets, and softer still ye flutes ;  
That winds and waters, lulled by magic sounds,  
May bear us smoothly to the Gallic shore !  
True, we have lost an empire—let it pass.  
True ; we may thank the perfidy of France,  
That picked the jewel out of England's crown,  
With all the cunning of an envious shrew.  
And let that pass—'twas but a trick of state !  
A brave man knows no malice, but at once  
Forgets in peace the injuries of war,  
And gives his direst foe a friend's embrace.  
And, shamed as we have been, to the very beard  
Braved and defied, and in our own sea proved  
Too weak for those decisive blows, that once  
Ensured us mastery there, we yet retain  
Some small pre-eminence ; we justly boast  
At least superior jockeyship, and claim  
The honours of the turf as all our own !  
Go then, well worthy of the praise ye seek,

And show the shame, ye might conceal at home,  
In foreign eyes !—be grooms and win the plate,  
Where once your nobler fathers won a crown !—

'Tis generous to communicate your skill  
To those that need it. Folly is soon learned :  
And under such preceptors who can fail ?

There is a pleasure in poetic pains,  
Which only poets know. The shifts and turns,  
The expedients and inventions multiform,  
To which the mind resorts, in chase of terms  
Though apt, yet coy, and difficult to win—  
To arrest the fleeting images, that fill  
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,  
And force them sit, till he has pencilled off  
A faithful likeness of the forms he views ;  
Then to dispose his copies with such art,  
That each may find its most propitious light,  
And shine by situation, hardly less  
Than by the labour and the skill it cost ;  
Are occupations of the poet's mind  
So pleasing, and that steal away the thought  
With such address from themes of sad import,  
That lost in his own musings, happy man !  
He feels the anxieties of life, denied  
Their wonted entertainment, all retire.  
Such joys has he that sings. But ah ! not such  
Or seldom such, the hearers of his song.  
Fastidious, or else listless, or perhaps  
Aware of nothing arduous in a task  
They never undertook, they little note  
His dangers or escapes, and haply find  
Their least amusement where he found the most.  
But is amusement all ? Studious of song,  
And yet ambitious not to sing in vain,

I would not trifle merely, though the world  
Be loudest in their praise, who do no more.  
Yet what can satire, whether grave or gay?  
It may correct a foible, may chastise  
The freaks of fashion, regulate the dress,  
Retrench a sword-blade, or displace a patch;  
But where are its sublimer trophies found?  
What vice has it subdued? whose heart reclaimed  
By rigour, or whom laughed into reform?  
Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed:  
Laughed at, he laughs again; and stricken hard,  
Turns to the stroke his adamantine scales,  
That fear no discipline of human hands.

The pulpit, therefore, (and I name it filled  
With solemn awe, that bids me well beware  
With what intent I touch that holy thing)—  
The pulpit (when the satirist has at last,  
Strutting and vapouring in an empty school,  
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte)—  
I say the pulpit (in the sober use  
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)  
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,  
The most important and effectual guard,  
Support and ornament of Virtue's cause.  
There stands the messenger of truth; there stands  
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear.  
By him the violated law speaks out  
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.  
He stablishes the strong, restores the weak,  
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,  
And, armed himself in panoply complete  
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms

Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule  
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
The sacramental host of God's elect!  
Are all such teachers?—would to Heaven all were!  
But hark—the doctor's voice!—fast wedged between  
Two empyrics he stands, and with swoln cheeks  
Inspires the news, his trumpet. Keener far  
Than all invective is his bold harangue,  
While through that public organ of report,  
He hails the clergy; and, defying shame,  
Announces to the world his own and theirs!  
He teaches those to read whom schools dismissed,  
And colleges, untaught; sells accent, tone,  
And emphasis in score, and gives to prayer  
The *adagio* and *andante* it demands.  
He grinds divinity of other days  
Down into modern use; transforms old print  
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes  
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.  
Are there who purchase of the doctor's ware?  
O, name it not in Gath!—it cannot be,  
That grave and learned clerks should need such aid.  
He doubtless is in sport, and does but droll,  
Assuming thus a rank unknown before—  
Grand caterer and dry-nurse of the church!  
I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,  
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life,  
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof  
That he is honest in the sacred cause.  
To such I render more than mere respect,  
Whose actions say, that they respect themselves.  
But loose in morals, and in manners vain,  
In conversation frivolous, in dress  
Extreme, at once rapacious and profuse;

Frequent in park with lady at his side,  
 Ambling and prattling scandal as he goes ;  
 But rare at home, and never at his books,  
 Or with his pen, save when he scrawls a card ;  
 Constant at routs, familiar with a round  
 Of ladyships, a stranger to the poor ;  
 Ambitious of preferment for its gold,  
 And well-prepared, by ignorance and sloth,  
 By infidelity and love of world,  
 To make God's work a sinecure ; a slave  
 To his own pleasures and his patron's pride ;  
 From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,  
 Preserve the church ! and lay not careless hands  
 On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
 Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
 Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
 His master strokes, and draw from his design.  
 I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;  
 In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,  
 And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,  
 And natural in gesture ; much impressed  
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
 May feel it too ; affectionate in look,  
 And tender in address, as well becomes  
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.  
 Behold the picture !—Is it like ?—Like whom ?  
 The things that mount the rostrum with a skip,  
 And then skip down again ; pronounce a text :  
 Cry—hem ! and reading what they never wrote,  
 Just fifteen minutes, huddle up their work,  
 And with a well-bred whisper close the scene !  
 In man or woman, but far most in man,

And most of all in man that ministers  
And serves the altar, in my soul I loathe  
All affectation. 'Tis my perfect scorn ;  
Object of my implacable disgust.  
What !—will a man play tricks, will he indulge  
A silly fond conceit of his fair form  
And just proportion, fashionable mien  
And pretty face, in presence of his God ?  
Or will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,  
As with the diamond on his lily hand,  
And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,  
When I am hungry for the bread of life ?  
He mocks his Maker, prostitutes and shames  
His noble office, and, instead of truth,  
Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.  
Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,  
And start theatric, practised at the glass !  
I seek divine simplicity in him,  
Who handles things divine ; and all besides,  
Though learned with labour, and though much ad-  
mired  
By curious eyes and judgments ill informed,  
To me is odious as the nasal twang  
Heard at conventicle, where worthy men,  
Misled by custom, strain celestial themes  
Through the pressed nostril, spectacle-bestrud.  
Some decent in demeanour while they preach,  
That task performed, relapse into themselves ;  
And, having spoken wisely, at the close  
Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,  
Whoe'er was edified, themselves were not !  
Forth comes the pocket mirror.—First we stroke  
An eyebrow ; next compose a straggling lock ;  
Then with an air most gracefully performed

Fall back into our seat, extend an arm,  
 And lay it at its ease with gentle care,  
 With handkerchief in hand depending low ;  
 The better hand more busy gives the nose  
 Its bergamot, or aids the indebted eye  
 With opera glass, to watch the moving scene,  
 And recognize the slow retiring fair.—  
 Now this is fulsome, and offends me more  
 Than in a churchman slovenly neglect  
 And rustic coarseness would. A heavenly mind  
 May be indifferent to her house of clay,  
 And slight the hovel as beneath her care ;  
 But how a body so fantastic, trim,  
 And quaint, in its deportment and attire,  
 Can lodge a heavenly mind—demands a doubt.

He, that negotiates between God and man,  
 As God's ambassador, the grand concerns  
 Of judgment and of mercy, should beware  
 Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful  
 To court a grin, when you should woo a soul ;  
 To break a jest, when pity would inspire  
 Pathetic exhortation ; and to address  
 The skittish fancy with facetious tales,  
 When sent with God's commission to the heart !  
 So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip  
 Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,  
 And I consent you take it for your text,  
 Your only one, till sides and benches fail.  
 No : he was serious in a serious cause,  
 And understood too well the weighty terms,  
 That he had taken in charge. He would not stoop  
 To conquer those by jocular exploits,  
 Whom truth and soberness assailed in vain.  
 O Popular Applause ! what heart of man

Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms ?  
 The wisest and the best feel urgent need  
 Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales ;  
 But swelled into a gust—who then, alas !  
 With all his canvass set, and inexpert,  
 And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power ?  
 Praise from the rivelled lips of toothless, bald  
 Decrepitude, and in the looks of lean  
 And craving Poverty, and in the bow  
 Respectful of the smutched artificer,  
 Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb  
 The bias of the purpose, How much more,  
 Poured forth by beauty splendid and polite,  
 In language soft as Adoration breathes ?  
 Ah spare your idol ! think him human still.  
 Charms he may have, but he has frailties too !  
 Dote not too much, nor spoil what ye admire.

All truth is from the sempiternal source  
 Of light divine. But Egypt, Greece, and Rome,  
 Drew from the stream below. More favoured we  
 Drink, when we choose it, at the fountain-head.  
 To them it flowed much mingled and defiled  
 With hurtful error, prejudice and dreams  
 Illusive of philosophy, so called  
 But falsely. Sages after sages strove  
 In vain to filter off a crystal draught  
 Pure from the lees, which often more enhanced  
 The thirst that slaked it, and not seldom bred  
 Intoxication and delirium wild.  
 In vain they pushed inquiry to the birth  
 And spring-time of the world ; asked, whence is man ?  
 Why formed at all ? and wherefore as he is ?  
 Where must he find his Maker ? with what rites  
 Adore him ? Will he hear, accept, and bless ?



Or does he sit regardless of his works?  
Has man within him an immortal seed?  
Or does the tomb take all? If he survive  
His ashes, where? and in what weal or wo?  
Knots worthy of solution, which alone  
A Deity could solve. Their answers, vague  
And all at random, fabulous and dark,  
Left them as dark themselves. Their rules of life,  
Defective and unsanctioned, proved too weak  
To bind the roving appetite, and lead  
Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.  
'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,  
Explains all mysteries except her own,  
And so illuminates the path of life,  
That fools discover it, and stray no more.)  
Now tell me, dignified and sapient sir,  
My man of morals, nurtured in the shades  
Of Academus—is this false or true?  
Is Christ the abler teacher, or the schools?  
If Christ, then why resort at every turn  
To Athens or to Rome, for wisdom short  
Of man's occasions, when in him reside  
Grace, knowledge, comfort—an unfathomed store?  
How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,  
Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully, preached!  
Men that, if now alive, would sit content  
And humble learners of a Saviour's worth,  
Preach it who might. Such was their love of truth,  
Their thirst of knowledge, and their candour too!

And thus it is.—The pastor, either vain  
By nature, or by flattery made so, taught  
To gaze at its own splendour, and to exalt  
Absurdly, not his office, but himself;  
Or unenlightened, and too proud to learn;

Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach;  
Perverting often by the stress of lewd  
And loose example, whom he should instruct;  
Exposes, and holds up to broad disgrace,  
The noblest function, and discredits much  
The brightest truths that man has ever seen.  
For ghostly counsel, if it either fall  
Below the exigence, or be not backed  
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof  
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;  
Or be dishonoured in the exterior form  
And mode of its conveyance by such tricks  
As move derision, or by foppish airs  
And histrionic mummery, that let down  
The pulpit to the level of the stage;  
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.  
The weak perhaps are moved, but are not taught,  
While prejudice in men of stronger minds  
Takes deeper root, confirmed by what they see.  
A relaxation of religion's hold  
Upon the roving and untutored heart  
Soon follows, and, the curb of conscience snapped,  
The laity run wild.—But do they now?  
Note their extravagance, and be convinced.

As nations, ignorant of God, contrive  
A wooden one; so we, no longer taught  
By monitors that mother church supplies,  
Now make our own. . . . Posterity will ask  
(If e'er posterity see verse of mine)  
Some fifty or a hundred lustrums hence,  
What was a monitor in George's days?—  
My very gentle reader, yet unborn,  
Of whom I needs must augur better things,  
Since Heaven would sure grow weary of a world

Productive only of a race like ours,  
A monitor is wood—plank shaven thin.  
We wear it at our backs. There, closely braced  
And neatly fitted, it compresses hard  
The prominent and most unsightly bones,  
And binds the shoulders flat. We prove its use  
Sovereign and most effectual to secure  
A form, not now gymnastic as of yore,  
From rickets and distortion, else our lot.  
But thus admonished, we can walk erect—  
One proof at least of manhood! while the friend  
Sticks close, a Mentor worthy of his charge.  
Our habits, costlier than Lucullus wore,  
And by caprice as multiplied as his,  
Just please us while the fashion is at full,  
But change with every moon. The sycophant,  
Who waits to dress us, arbitrates their date;  
Surveys his fair reversion with keen eye;  
Finds one ill made, another obsolete,  
This fits not nicely, that is ill conceived;  
And, making prize of all that he condemns,  
With our expenditure defrays his own.  
Variety's the very spice of life, ))  
That gives it all its flavour. We have run  
Through every change, that Fancy, at the loom  
Exhausted, has had genius to supply;  
And, studious of mutation still, discard  
A real elegance, a little used,  
For monstrous novelty, and strange disguise.  
We sacrifice to dress, till household joys  
And comforts cease. Dress drains our cellar dry,  
And keeps our larder lean: puts out our fires;  
And introduces hunger, frost, and woe,  
Where peace and hospitality might reign.

What man that lives, and that knows how to live,  
Would fail to exhibit at the public shows  
A form as splendid as the proudest there,  
Though appetite raise outcries at the cost?  
A man o' th' town dines late, but soon enough,  
With reasonable forecast and despatch,  
To ensure a side-box station at half-price.  
You think perhaps, so delicate his dress,  
His daily fare as delicate. Alas!  
He picks clean teeth, and, busy as he seems  
With an old tavern quill, is hungry yet!  
The route is Folly's circle, which she draws  
With magic wand. So potent is the spell,  
That none, decoyed into that fatal ring,  
Unless by Heaven's peculiar grace, escape.  
There we grow early gray, but never wise;  
There form connections, but acquire no friend;  
Solicit pleasure hopeless of success;  
Waste youth in occupations only fit  
For second childhood, and devote old age  
To sports, which only childhood could excuse.  
There they are happiest, who dissemble best  
Their weariness; and they the most polite,  
Who squander time and treasure with a smile,  
Though at their own destruction. She that asks  
Her dear five hundred friends, contemns them all,  
And hates their coming. They (what can they less?)  
Make just reprisals; and, with cringe and shrug,  
And bow obsequious, hide their hate of her.  
All catch the frenzy, downwards from her grace,  
Whose flambeaux flash against the morning skies,  
And gild our chamber ceilings as they pass,  
To her, who, frugal only that her thrift  
May feed excesses she can ill afford,

Is hackney'd home unlackey'd; who, in haste  
Alighting, turns the key in her own door,  
And, at the watchman's lantern borrowing light,  
Finds a cold bed her only comfort left.  
Wives beggar husbands, husbands starve their wives,  
On Fortune's velvet altar offering up  
Their last poor pittance—Fortune, most severe  
Of goddesses yet known, and costlier far  
Than all, that held their routes in Juno's heaven.—  
So fare we in this prison-house the World;  
And 'tis a fearful spectacle to see  
So many maniacs dancing in their chains.  
They gaze upon the links that hold them fast,  
With eyes of anguish, execrate their lot,  
Then shake them in despair, and dance again!

Now basket up the family of plagues,  
That waste our vitals; peculation, sale  
Of honour, perjury, corruption, frauds  
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,  
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen  
As the necessities their authors feel;  
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat  
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.  
Profusion unrestrained, with all that's base  
In character, has littered all the land,  
And bred, within the memory of no few,  
A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,  
A people, such as never was till now.  
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all  
That gives society its beauty, strength,  
Convenience, and security, and use:  
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapped  
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws  
Can seize the slippery prey: unites the knot

Of union, and converts the sacred band,  
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.  
Profusion, deluging a state with lusts  
Of grossest nature and of worst effects,  
Prepares it for its ruin : hardens, blinds,  
And warps, the consciences of public men,  
Till they can laugh at Virtue ; mock the fools,  
That trust them ; and in the end disclose a face,  
That would have shocked Credulity herself,  
Unmasked, vouchsafing this their sole excuse—  
Since all alike are selfish, why not they ?  
This does Profusion, and the accursed cause  
Of such deep mischief has itself a cause.

In colleges and halls in ancient days,  
When learning, virtue, piety, and truth,  
Were precious, and inculcated with care,  
There dwelt a sage called Discipline. His head,  
Not yet by time completely silvered o'er,  
Bespoke him past the bounds of freakish youth,  
But strong for service still, and unimpaired.  
His eye was meek and gentle, and a smile  
Played on his lips ; and in his speech was heard  
Paternal sweetness, dignity, and love.  
The occupation dearest to his heart  
Was to encourage goodness. He would stroke  
The head of modest and ingenious worth,  
That blushed at its own praise ; and press the youth  
Close to his side, that pleased him. Learning grew  
Beneath his care a thriving vigorous plant ;  
The mind was well informed, the passions held  
Subordinate, and diligence was choice.  
If e'er it chanced, as sometimes chance it must,  
That one among so many overleaped  
The limits of control, his gentle eye

Grew stern, and darted a severe rebuke :  
His frown was full of terror, and his voice  
Shook the delinquent with such fits of awe,  
As left him not, till penitence had won  
Lost favour back again, and closed the breach.  
But Discipline, a faithful servant long,  
Declined at length into the vale of years :  
A palsy struck his arm ; his sparkling eye  
Was quenched in rheums of age ; his voice, unstrung,  
Grew tremulous, and moved derision more  
Then reverence in perverse rebellious youth.  
So colleges and halls neglected much  
Their good old friend ; and Discipline at length,  
O'erlooked and unemployed, fell sick and died.  
Then Study languished, Emulation slept,  
And Virtue fled. The schools became a scene  
Of solemn farce, where Ignorance in stilts,  
His cap well lined with logic not his own,  
With parrot tongue performed the scholar's part,  
Proceeding soon a graduated dunce.  
Then Compromise had place, and Scrutiny  
Became stone-blind ; Precedence went in truck,  
And he was competent whose purse was so.  
A dissolution of all bonds ensued ;  
The curbs invented for the mulish mouth  
Of headstrong youth were broken ; bars and bolts  
Grew rusty by disuse ; and massy gates  
Forgot their office, opening with a touch ;  
Till gowns at length are found mere masquerade.  
The tasseled cap, and the spruce band a jest,  
A mockery of the world ! What need of these  
For gamesters, jockeys, brothellers impure,  
Spendthrifts, and booted sportsmen, oftener seen  
With belted waist and pointers at their heels,

Than in the bounds of duty? What was learned,  
If aught was learned in childhood, is forgot;  
And such expense, as pinches parents blue,  
And mortifies the liberal hand of love,  
Is squandered in pursuit of idle sports  
And vicious pleasures; buys the boy a name,  
That sits a stigma on his father's house,  
And cleaves through life inseparably close  
To him that wears it. What can after-games  
Of riper joys, and commerce with the world,  
The lewd vain world, that must receive him soon,  
Add to such erudition, thus acquired,  
Where science and where virtue are professed?  
They may confirm his habits, rivet fast  
His folly, but to spoil him is a task,  
That bids defiance to the united powers  
Of fashion, dissipation, taverns, stews.  
Now blame we most the nurslings or the nurse?  
The children crook'd, and twisted, and deformed,  
Through want of care; or her, whose winking eye  
And slumbering oscitancy mars the brood?  
The nurse no doubt. Regardless of her charge,  
She needs herself correction; needs to learn,  
That it is dangerous sporting with the world.  
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,  
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

All are not such. I had a brother once—  
Peace to the memory of a man of worth,  
A man of letters, and of manners too!  
Of manners sweet as Virtue always wears,  
When gay Good-nature dresses her in smiles.  
He graced a college,\* in which order yet

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\* Bene't Coll. Cambridge.



Was sacred ; and was honoured, loved, and wept,  
By more than one, themselves conspicuous there.  
Some minds, are tempered happily, and mixed  
With such ingredients of good sense, and taste  
Of what is excellent in man, they thirst  
With such a zeal to be what they approve,  
That no restraints can circumscribe them more  
Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake  
Nor can example hurt them ; what they see  
Of vice in others but enhancing more  
The charms of virtue in their just esteem,  
If such escape contagion, and emerge  
Pure from so foul a pool to shine abroad,  
And give the world their talents and themselves,  
Small thanks to those whose negligence or sloth  
Exposed their inexperience to the snare,  
And left them to an undirected choice.

See then the quiver broken and decayed,  
In which are kept our arrows ! Rusting there  
In wild disorder, and unfit for use,  
What wonder if, discharged into the world,  
They shame their shooters with a random flight,  
Their points obtuse, and feathers drunk with wine !  
Well may the church wage unsuccessful war  
With such artillery armed. Vice parries wide  
The undreaded volley with a sword of straw,  
And stands an impudent and fearless mark.

Have we not tracked the felon home, and found  
His birth-place and his dam ? The country mourns,  
Mourns because every plague, that can infest  
Society, and that saps and worms the base  
Of th' edifice, that Policy has raised,  
Swarms in all quarters : meets the eye, the ear,  
And suffocates the breath at every turn.

Profusion breeds them ; and the cause itself  
Of that calamitous mischief has been found ;  
Found too where most offensive, in the skirts  
Of the robed pedagogue ! Else let the arraigned  
Stand up unconscious, and refute the charge.—  
So when the Jewish leader stretched his arm,  
And waved his rod divine, a race obscene,  
Spawned in the muddy beds of Nile, came forth,  
Polluting Egypt ; gardens, fields, and plains,  
Were covered with the pest ; the streets were filled ;  
The croaking nuisance lurked in every nook ;  
Nor palaces, nor even chambers, 'scaped ;  
And the land stank—so numerous was the fry.

# THE TASK.

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## BOOK III.

### THE GARDEN.

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#### *Argument of the Third Book.*

Self-recollection and reproof.—Address to domestic happiness.—Some account of myself.—The vanity of many of their pursuits who are reputed wise.—Justification of my censures.—Divine illumination necessary to the most expert philosopher.—The question, What is truth? answered by other questions.—Domestic happiness addressed again.—Few lovers of the country.—My tame hare.—Occupations of a retired gentleman in his garden.—Pruning.—Framing.—Green-house.—Sowing of flower-seeds.—The country preferable to the town even in winter.—Reasons why it is deserted at that season.—Ruinous effects of gaming, and of expensive improvement.—Book concludes with an apostrophe to the metropolis.

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As one, who long in thickets and in brakes  
Entangled, winds now this way and now that  
His devious course uncertain, seeking home ;  
Or, having long in miry ways been foiled  
And sore discomfited, from slough to slough  
Plunging, and half despairing of escape ;  
If chance at length he find a greensward smooth  
And faithful to the foot, his spirits rise,  
He cherups brisk his ear-erecting steed,  
And winds his way with pleasure and with ease :  
So I, designing other themes, and called  
To adorn the Sofa with eulogium due,  
To tell its slumbers and to paint its dreams,

Have rambled wide, in country, city, seat  
Of academic fame (howe'er deserved,)  
Long held, and scarcely disengaged at last.  
But now with pleasant pace a cleanlier road  
I mean to tread: I feel myself at large,  
Courageous, and refreshed for future toil,  
If toil await me, or if dangers new.

Since pulpits fail, and sounding boards reflect  
Most part an empty, ineffectual sound,  
What chance that I, to fame so little known,  
Nor conversant with men or manners much,  
Should speak to purpose, or with better hope  
Crack the satiric thong? 'Twere wiser far  
For me, enamoured of sequestered scenes,  
And charmed with rural beauty, to repose  
Where chance may throw me, beneath elm or vine,  
My languid limbs, when summer sears the plains,  
Or, when rough winter rages, on the soft  
And sheltered sofa, while the nitrous air  
Feeds a blue flame, and makes a cheerful hearth;  
There, undisturbed by Folly, and apprized  
How great the danger of disturbing her,  
To muse in silence, or, at least, confine  
Remarks, that gall so many, to the few  
My partners in retreat. Disgust concealed  
Is oftentimes proof of wisdom, when the fault  
Is obstinate, and cure beyond our reach.

Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss  
Of Paradise, that hast survived the fall!  
Though few now taste thee unimpaired and pure,  
Or tasting long enjoy thee! too infirm,  
Or too incautious, to preserve thy sweets  
Unmixed with drops of bitter, which neglect  
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup;

Thou art the nurse of Virtue ; in thine arms  
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,  
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.  
Thou art not known where Pleasure is adored,  
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist  
And wandering eyes, still leaning on the arm  
Of Novelty, her fickle, frail support ;  
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,  
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love,  
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield.  
Forsaking thee what shipwreck have we made  
Of honour, dignity, and fair renown !  
Till prostitution elbows us aside  
In all our crowded streets ; and senates seem  
Convened for purposes of empire less,  
Than to release the adultrous from her bond.  
The adultrous ! what a theme for angry verse !  
What provocation to the indignant heart,  
That feels for injured love ! but I disdain  
The nauseous task to paint her as she is,  
Cruel, abandoned, glorying in her shame !  
No : let her pass, and, charioted along  
In guilty splendour, shake the public ways ;  
The frequency of crimes has washed them white,  
And verse of mine shall never brand the wretch,  
Whom matrons now of character unsmirched,  
And chaste themselves, are not ashamed to own.  
Virtue and vice had boundaries in old time,  
Not to be passed : and she, that had renounced  
Her sex's honour, was renounced herself  
By all that prized it ; not for prudery's sake,  
But dignity's, resentful of the wrong.  
'Twas hard perhaps on here and there a waif,  
Desirous to return, and not received :

But 'twas a wholesome rigour in the main,  
 And taught the unblemished to preserve with care  
 That purity, whose loss was loss of all.  
 Men too were nice in honour in those days,  
 And judged offenders well. Then he that sharped,  
 And pocketed a prize by fraud obtained,  
 Was marked and shunned as odious. He that sold  
 His country, or was slack when she required  
 His every nerve in action and at stretch,  
 Paid with the blood, that he had basely spared,  
 The price of his default. But now—yes, now  
 We are become so candid and so fair,  
 So liberal in construction, and so rich  
 In Christian charity, (good-natured age!)  
 That they are safe, sinners of either sex,  
 Transgress what laws they may. Well dressed, well  
     bred,

Well equipaged, is ticket good enough  
 To pass us readily through every door.  
 Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,  
 (And no man's hatred ever wronged her yet)  
 May claim this merit still—that she admits  
 The worth of what she mimics with such care,  
 And thus gives virtue indirect applause;  
 But she has burnt her mask, not needed here,  
 Where vice has such allowance, that her shifts  
 And specious semblances have lost their use.

I was a stricken deer, that left the herd  
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by one, who had himself  
 Been hurt by th' achers. In his side he bore,  
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.

With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.  
Since then, with few associates, in remote  
And silent woods I wander, far from those  
My former partners of the peopled scene ;  
With few associates, and not wishing more.  
Here much I ruminatè, as much I may,  
With other views of men and manners now  
Than once, and others of a life to come.  
I see that all are wanderers, gone astray  
Each in his own delusions ; they are lost  
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed  
And never won. Dream after dream ensues ;  
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,  
And still are disappointed. Rings the world  
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,  
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,  
And find the total of their hopes and fears  
Dreams, empty dreams. The million flit as gay  
As if created only like the fly,  
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,  
To sport their season, and be seen no more.  
The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,  
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.  
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats  
Of heroes little known ; and call the rant  
A history ; describe the man, of whom  
His own coevals took but little note,  
And paint his person, character, and views,  
As they had known him from his mother's womb.  
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,  
In which obscurity has wrapped them up,  
The threads of politic and shrewd design,  
That ran through all his purposes, and charge

His mind with meanings that he never had,  
Or, having, kept concealed. Some drill and bore  
The solid earth, and from the strata there  
Extract a register, by which we learn,  
That he who made it, and revealed its date  
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.  
Some, more acute, and more industrious still,  
Contrive creation; travel nature up  
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,  
And tell us whence the stars; why some are fixed,  
And planetary some; what gave them first  
Rotation from what fountain flowed their light.  
Great contest follows, and much learned dust  
Involves the combatants; each claiming truth,  
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend  
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp  
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws  
To distant worlds, and trifling in their own.  
Is't not a pity now that tickling rheums  
Should ever tease the lungs, and blear the sight,  
Of oracles like these? Great pity too,  
That having wielded th' elements, and built  
A thousand systems, each in his own way,  
They should go out in fume, and be forgot?  
Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they  
But frantic, who thus spend it? all for smoke—  
Eternity for bubbles proves at last  
A senseless bargain. When I see such games  
Played by the creatures of a Power, who swears  
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool  
To a sharp reckoning, that has lived in vain;  
And when I weigh this seeming wisdom well,  
And prove it in the infallible result  
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart



Dissolve in pity, and account the learned,  
If this be learning, most of all deceived.  
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps,  
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.  
Defend me therefore, common sense, say I,  
From reveries so airy, from the toil  
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old in drawing nothing up!

'Twere well, says one sage erudite, profound,  
Terribly arched, and aquiline his nose,  
And overbuilt with most impending brows,  
'Twere well, could you permit the world to live  
As the world pleases: what's the world to you?  
Much. I was born of woman, and drew milk  
As sweet as charity from human breasts.  
I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,  
And exercise all functions of a man.  
How then should I and any man that lives  
Be strangers to each other? Pierce my vein,  
Take of the crimson stream meandering there,  
And catechise it well; apply thy glass,  
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood  
Congenial with thine own: and, if it be,  
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose  
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,  
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which  
One common Maker bound me to the kind?  
True; I am no proficient, I confess,  
In arts like yours. I cannot call the swift  
And perilous lightnings from the angry clouds,  
And bid them hide themselves in earth beneath;  
I cannot analyze the air, nor catch  
The parallax of yonder lum'nous point,  
That seems half quenched in the immense abyss:

Such powers I boast not—neither can I rest  
A silent witness of the headlong rage,  
Or heedless folly, by which thousands die,  
Bone of my bone, and kindred souls to mine.

God never meant that man should scale the heavens  
By strides of human wisdom, in his works,  
Though wondrous : he commands us in his word  
To seek him rather where his mercy shines.  
The mind, indeed, enlightened from above,  
Views him in all ; ascribes to the grand cause  
The grand effect ; acknowledges with joy  
His manner, and with rapture tastes his style.  
But never yet did philosophic tube,  
That brings the planets home into the eye  
Of Observation, and discovers, else  
Not visible, his family of worlds,  
Discover him that rules them ; such a veil  
Hangs over mortal eyes, blind from the birth,  
And dark in things divine. Full often too  
Our wayward intellect, the more we learn  
Of nature, overlooks her author more ;  
From instrumental causes proud to draw  
Conclusions retrograde, and mad mistake.  
But if his Word once teach us, shoot a ray  
Through all the heart's dark chambers, and reveal  
Truths undiscerned but by that holy light,  
Then all is plain. Philosophy, baptized  
In the pure fountain of eternal love,  
Has eyes indeed ; and viewing all she sees  
As meant to indicate a God to man,  
Gives *him* his praise, and forfeits not her own.  
Learning has borne such fruit in other days  
On all her branches : piety has found  
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer

Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.  
Such was thy wisdom, Newton, child-like sage!  
Sagacious reader of the works of God,  
And in his word, sagacious. Such too thine,  
Milton, whose genius had angelic wings,  
And fed on manna! And such thine, in whom  
Our British Themis gloried with just cause,  
Immortal Hale; for deep discernment praised,  
And sound integrity, not more than famed  
For sanctity of manners undefiled.

All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades  
Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind;  
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream.  
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,  
And we that worship him ignoble graves.  
Nothing is proof against the general curse  
Of vanity, that seizes all below.

The only amaranthine flower on earth  
Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.  
But what is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put  
To Truth itself, that deigned him no reply.  
And wherefore? will not God impart his light  
To them that ask it?—Freely—'tis his joy,  
His glory, and his nature, to impart.  
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,  
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.

What's that, which brings contempt upon a book,  
And him who writes it, though the style be neat,  
The method clear, and argument exact?  
That makes a minister in holy things  
The joy of many, and the dread of more,  
His name a theme for praise and for reproach?  
That, while it gives us worth in God's account,  
Depreciates and undoes us in our own?

What pearl is it, that rich men cannot buy,  
That learning is too proud to gather up ;  
But which the poor, and the despised of all,  
Seek and obtain, and often find unsought ?  
Tell me—and I will tell thee what is truth.

O friendly to the best pursuits of man,  
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,  
Domestic life in rural pleasure passed !  
Few know thy value, and few taste thy sweets ;  
Though many boast thy favours, and affect  
To understand and choose thee for their own.  
But foolish man foregoes his proper bliss,  
E'en as his first progenitor, and quits,  
Though placed in Paradise, (for earth has still  
Some traces of her youthful beauty left,)  
Substantial happiness for transient joy.  
Scenes formed for contemplation, and to nurse  
The growing seeds of wisdom ; that suggest,  
By every pleasing image they present,  
Reflections such as meliorate the heart,  
Compose the passions, and exalt the mind ;  
Scenes such as these 'tis his supreme delight  
To fill with riot and defile with blood.  
Should some contagion, kind to the poor brutes  
We persecute, annihilate the tribes  
That draw the sportsman over hill and dale,  
Fearless, and rapt away from all his cares ;  
Should never game-fowl hatch her eggs again,  
Nor baited hook deceive the fish's eye ;  
Could pageantry and dance, and feast and song,  
Be quelled in all our summer-months' retreats ;  
How many self-deluded nymphs and swains,  
Who dream they have a taste for fields and groves,  
Would find them hideous nurseries of the spleen,  
And crowd the roads, impatient for the town !

They love the country, and none else, who seek  
For their own sake its silence, and its shade.  
Delights which who would leave, that has a heart  
Susceptible of pity, or a mind  
Cultured and capable of sober thought,  
For all the savage din of the swift pack,  
And clamours of the field?—Detested sport,  
That owes its pleasures to another's pain;  
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks  
Of harmless nature, dumb, but yet endued  
With eloquence, that agonies inspire,  
Of silent tears and heart-distending sighs:  
Vain tears, alas, and sighs that never find  
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!  
Well—one at least is safe. One sheltered hare  
Has never heard the sanguinary yell  
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.  
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,  
Whom ten long years' experience of my care  
Has made at last familiar: she has lost  
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,  
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine.  
Yes—thou mayst eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
That feeds thee: thou mayst frolic on the floor  
At evening, and at night retire secure  
To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed;  
For I have gained thy confidence, have pledged  
All that is human in me, to protect  
Thine unsuspecting gratitude and love.  
If I survive thee, I will dig thy grave;  
And, when I place thee in it, sighing say,  
I knew at least one hare that had a friend.\*

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\* See the note at the end of this volume.

How various his employments, whom the world  
Calls idle ; and who justly in return  
Esteems that busy world an idler too !  
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,  
Delightful industry enjoyed at home,  
And Nature in her cultivated trim  
Dressed to his taste, inviting him abroad—  
Can he want occupation, who has these ?  
Will he be idle, who has much to enjoy ?  
Me therefore studious of laborious ease,  
Not slothful, happy to deceive the time,  
Not waste it, and aware that human life  
Is but a loan to be repaid with use,  
When He shall call his debtors to account,  
From whom are all our blessings, business finds  
E'en here : while sedulous I seek to improve,  
At least neglect not, or leave unemployed,  
The mind he gave me ; driving it, though slack  
Too oft, and much impeded in its work  
By causes not to be divulged in vain,  
To its just point—the service of mankind.  
He that attends to his interior self,  
That has a heart, and keeps it ; has a mind  
That hungers, and supplies it ; and who seeks  
A social, not a dissipated life,  
Has business ; feels himself engaged to achieve  
No unimportant, though a silent task.  
A life all turbulence and noise may seem  
To him that leads it wise, and to be praised ;  
But wisdom is a pearl with most success  
Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.  
He that is ever occupied in storms,  
Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,  
Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.

The morning finds the self-sequestered man,  
Fresh for his task, intend what task he may.  
Whether inclement seasons recommend  
His warm but simple home, where he enjoys  
With her, who shares his pleasures and his heart,  
Sweet converse, sipping calm the fragrant lymph,  
Which neatly she prepares ; then to his book  
Well chosen, and not sullenly perused  
In selfish silence, but imparted oft,  
As aught occurs, that she may smile to hear,  
Or turn to nourishment, digested well.  
Or if the garden with its many cares,  
All well repaid, demand him, he attends  
The welcome call, conscious how much the hand  
Of lubbard labour needs his watchful eye,  
Oft loitering lazily, if not o'erseen,  
Or misapplying his unskilful strength.  
Nor does he govern only or direct,  
But much performs himself. No works indeed,  
That ask robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,  
Servile employ ; but such as may amuse,  
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.  
Proud of his well-spread walls, he views his trees,  
That meet, no barren interval between,  
With pleasure more than e'en their fruits afford ;  
Which, save himself who trains them, none can feel.  
These therefore are his own peculiar charge ;  
No meaner hand may discipline the shoots,  
None but his steel approach them. What is weak,  
Distempered, or has lost prolific powers,  
Impaired by age, his unrelenting hand  
Dooms to the knife : nor does he spare the soft  
And succulent, that feeds its giant growth,  
But barren, at the expense of neighbouring twigs

Less ostentatious, and yet studded thick  
 With hopeful gems. The rest, no portion left  
 That may disgrace his art, or disappoint  
 Large expectation, he disposes neat  
 At measured distances, that air and sun,  
 Admitted freely, may afford their aid,  
 And ventilate and warm the swelling buds.  
 Hence Summer has her riches, Autumn hence,  
 And hence e'en Winter fills his withered hand  
 With blushing fruits, and plenty not his own.\*  
 Fair recompense of labour well bestowed,  
 And wise precaution; which a clime so rude  
 Makes needful still, whose Spring is but the child  
 Of churlish Winter, in her froward moods  
 Discovering much the temper of her sire.  
 For oft, as if in her the stream of mild  
 Maternal nature had reserved its course,  
 She brings her infants forth with many smiles;  
 But once delivered kills them with a frown.  
 He therefore, timely warned, himself supplies  
 Her want of care, screening and keeping warm  
 The plenteous bloom, that no rough blast may sweep  
 His garlands from the boughs. Again, as oft  
 As the sun peeps and vernal airs breathe mild,  
 The fence withdrawn, he gives them every beam,  
 And spreads his hopes before the blaze of day.

To raise the prickly and green-coated gourd,  
 So grateful to the palate, and when rare  
 So coveted, else base and disesteemed—  
 Food for the vulgar merely—is an art  
 That toiling ages have but just matured,  
 And at this moment unassayed in song.

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\* *Miraturque novos fructus et non sua poma.*—VIRG.



Yet gnats have had, and frogs and mice, long since,  
Their eulogy ; those sang the Mantuan bard,  
And these the Grecian, in ennobling strains ;  
And in thy numbers, Phillips, shines for aye  
The solitary shilling. Pardon then,  
Ye sage dispensers of poetic fame,  
The ambition of one meaner far, whose powers,  
Presuming an attempt not less sublime,  
Pant for the praise of dressing to the taste  
Of critic appetite, no sordid fare,  
A cucumber, while costly yet and scarce.

The stable yields a stercoraceous heap,  
Impregnated with quick fermenting salts,  
And potent to resist the freezing blast :  
For, ere the beech and elm have cast their leaf  
Deciduous, when now November dark  
Checks vegetation in the torpid plant  
Exposed to his cold breath, the task begins.  
Warily therefore, and with prudent heed,  
He seeks a favoured spot ; that where he builds  
The agglomerated pile, his frame may front  
The sun's meridian disk, and at the back  
Enjoy close shelter, wall, or reeds, or hedge  
Impervious to the wind. First he bids spread  
Dry fern or littered hay, that may imbibe  
The ascending damps ; then leisurely impose,  
And lightly, shaking it with agile hand  
From the full fork, the saturated straw.  
What longest binds the closest forms secure  
The shapely side, that as it rises takes,  
By just degrees, an overhanging breadth,  
Sheltering the base with its projected eaves ;  
The uplifted frame, compact at every joint,  
And overlaid with clear translucent glass,

He settles next upon the sloping mount,  
Whose sharp declivity shoots off secure  
From the dashed pane the deluge as it falls.  
He shuts it close, and the first labour ends.  
Thrice must the voluble and restless Earth  
Spin round upon her axle, ere the warmth,  
Slow gathering in the midst, through the square mass  
Diffused, attain the surface : when, behold !  
A pestilent and most corrosive steam,  
Like a gross fog Bœotian, rising fast,  
And fast condensed upon the dewy sash,  
Asks egress ; which obtained, the overcharged  
And drenched conservatory breathes abroad,  
In volumes wheeling slow, the vapour dank ;  
And, purified, rejoices to have lost  
Its foul inhabitant. But to assuage  
The impatient fervour, which it first conceives  
Within its reeking bosom, threatening death  
To his young hopes, requires discreet delay.  
Experience, slow preceptress, teaching oft  
The way to glory by miscarriage foul,  
Must prompt him, and admonish how to catch  
The auspicious moment, when the tempered heat,  
Friendly to vital motion, may afford  
Soft fomentation, and invite the seed.  
The seed, selected wisely, plump, and smooth,  
And glossy, he commits to pots of size  
Diminutive, well filled with well-prepared  
And fruitful soil, that has been treasured long,  
And drank no moisture from the dripping clouds.  
These on the warm and genial earth, that hides  
The smoking manure, and o'erspreads it all,  
He places lightly, and, as time subdues  
The range of fermentation, plunges deep

In the soft medium, till they stand immersed.  
Then rise the tender germs upstarting quick,  
And spreading wide their spongy lobes; at first  
Pale, wan, and livid; but assuming soon,  
If fanned by balmy and nutritious air,  
Strained though the friendly mats, a vivid green.  
Two leaves produced, two rough indented leaves,  
Cautious he pinches from the second stalk  
A pimple, that portends a future sprout,  
And interdicts its growth. Thence straight succeed  
The branches, sturdy to the utmost wish;  
Prolific all, and harbingers of more.  
The crowded roots demand enlargement now,  
And transplantation in an ampler space.  
Indulged in what they wish, they soon supply  
Large foliage, o'ershadowing golden flowers,  
Blown on the summit of the apparent fruit.  
These have their sexes! and, when summer shines,  
The bee transports the fertilizing meal  
From flower to flower, and e'en the breathing air  
Wafts the rich prize to its appointed use.  
Not so when Winter scowls. Assistant Art  
Then acts in Nature's office, brings to pass  
The glad espousals, and ensures the crop.

Grudge not, ye rich (since luxury must have  
His dainties, and the World's more numerous half  
Lives by contriving delicates for you,)  
Grudge not the cost. Ye little know the cares,  
The vigilance, the labour, and the skill,  
That day and night are exercised, and hang  
Upon the ticklish balance of suspense,  
That ye may garnish your profuse regales  
With summer fruits brought forth by wintry suns.  
Ten thousand dangers lie in wait to thwart

The process. Heat, and cold, and wind, and steam,  
Moisture and drought, mice, worms, and swarming  
flies,

Minute as dust, and numberless, oft work  
Dire disappointment, that admits no cure,  
And which no care can obviate. It were long,  
Too long, to tell the expedients and the shifts,  
Which he that fights a season so severe  
Devises, while he guards his tender trust ;  
And oft at last in vain. The learned and wise  
Sarcastic would exclaim, and judge the song  
Cold as its theme, and like its theme the fruit  
Of too much labour, worthless when produced.

Who loves a garden loves a green-house too,  
Unconscious of a less propitious clime,  
There blooms exotic beauty, warm and snug,  
While the winds whistle, and the snows descend.  
The spiry myrtle with unwithering leaf  
Shines there, and flourishes. The golden boast  
Of Portugal, and western India there,  
The ruddier orange, and the paler lime,  
Peep through the polished foliage at the storm,  
And seem to smile at what they need not fear.  
The amomum there with intermingling flowers  
And cherries hangs her twigs. Geranium boasts  
Her crimson honours ; and the spangled beau,  
Ficoides, glitter bright the winter long.  
All plants, of every leaf, that can endure  
The winter's frown, if screened from his shrewd bite,  
Live there and prosper. Those Ausonia claims,  
Levantine regions these ; the Azores send  
Their jessamine, her jessamine remote  
Caffraria : foreigners from many lands,  
They form one social shade, as if convened

By magic summons of the Orphean lyre.  
Yet just arrangement, rarely brought to pass  
But by a master's hand, disposing well  
The gay diversities of leaf and flower,  
Must lend its aid to illustrate all their charms,  
And dress the regular yet various scene.  
Plant behind plant aspiring, in the van  
The dwarfish, in the rear retired, but still  
Sublime above the rest the statelier stand.  
So once were ranged the sons of ancient Rome,  
A noble show! while Roscius trod the stage,  
And so, while Garrick, as renowned as he,  
The sons of Albion; fearing each to lose  
Some note of Nature's music from his lips,  
And covetous of Shakespeare's beauty, seen  
In every flash of his far-beaming eye.  
Nor taste alone and well-contrived display  
Suffice to give the marshalled ranks the grace  
Of their complete effect. Much yet remains  
Unsung, and many cares are yet behind,  
And more laborious; cares on which depends  
Their vigour, injured soon, not soon restored.  
The soil must be renewed, which often washed  
Loses its treasure of salubrious salts,  
And disappoints the roots; the slender roots  
Close interwoven, where they meet the vase  
Must smooth be shorn away; the sapless branch  
Must fly before the knife; the withered leaf  
Must be detached, and where it strews the floor  
Swept with a woman's neatness, breeding else  
Contagion, and disseminating death.  
Discharge but these kind offices, (and who  
Would spare, that loves them, offices like these?)  
Well they reward the toil. The sight is pleased,

The scent regaled, each odoriferous leaf,  
Each opening blossom, freely breathes abroad  
Its gratitude, and thanks him with its sweets.

So manifold, all pleasing in their kind,  
All healthful, are the employs of rural life,  
Reiterated as the wheel of time  
Runs round ; still ending, and beginning still.  
Nor are these all. To deck the shapely knoll,  
That softly swelled and gaily dressed appears  
A flowery island, from the dark green lawn  
Emerging, must be deemed a labour due  
To no mean hand, and asks the touch of taste.  
Here also grateful mixture of well-matched  
And sorted hues (each giving each relief,  
And by contrasted beauty shining more)  
Is needful. Strength may wield the ponderous spade,  
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home ;  
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows,  
And most attractive, is the fair result  
Of thought, the creature of a polished mind.  
Without it all is gothic as the scene,  
To which the insipid citizen resorts  
Near yonder heath ; where Industry mispent,  
But proud of his uncouth ill-chosen task,  
Has made a heaven on earth ; with suns and moons  
Of close-crammed stones has charged the encumbered  
soil,

And fairly laid the zodiac in the dust.  
He therefore, who would see his flowers disposed  
Sightly and in just order, ere he gives  
The beds the trusted treasure of their seeds,  
Forecasts the future whole ; that when the scene  
Shall break into its preconceived display,  
Each for itself, and all as with one voice

Conspiring, may attest his bright design.  
Nor even then, dismissing as performed  
His pleasant work, may he suppose it done.  
Few self-supported flowers endure the wind  
Uninjured, but expect the upholding aid  
Of the smooth shaven prop, and, neatly tied,  
Are wedded thus, like beauty to old age,  
For interest sake, the living to the dead.  
Some clothe the soil that feeds them, far diffused  
And lowly creeping, modest and yet fair,  
Like virtue, thriving most where little seen ;  
Some more aspiring catch the neighbour shrub  
With clasping tendrils, and invest his branch,  
Else unadorned, with many a gay festoon  
And fragrant chaplet, recompensing well  
The strength they borrow with the grace they lend.  
All hate the rank society of weeds,  
Noisome, and ever greedy to exhaust  
The impoverished earth ; an overbearing race,  
That, like the multitude made faction-mad,  
Disturb good order, and degrade true worth.

O blest seclusion from a jarring world,  
Which he, thus occupied, enjoys ! Retreat  
Cannot indeed to guilty man restore  
Lost innocence, or cancel follies past ;  
But it has peace, and much secures the mind  
From all assaults of evil ; proving still  
A faithful barrier, not o'erleaped with ease  
By vicious Custom, raging uncontrolled  
Abroad, and desolating public life.  
When fierce Temptation, seconded within  
By traitor Appetite, and armed with darts  
Tempered in hell, invades the throbbing breast,  
To combat may be glorious, and success

Perhaps may crown us ; but to fly is safe.  
Had I the choice of sublunary good,  
What could I wish that I possess not here ?  
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace,  
No loose or wanton, though a wandering muse,  
And constant occupation without care.  
Thus blest I draw a picture of that bliss ;  
Hopeless, indeed, that dissipated minds,  
And profligate abusers of a world  
Created fair so much in vain for them,  
Should seek the guiltless joys that I describe,  
Allured by my report : but sure no less,  
That self-condemned they must neglect the prize,  
And what they will not taste must yet approve.  
What we admire we praise : and, when we praise,  
Advance it into notice, that, its worth  
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.  
I therefore recommend, though at the risk  
Of popular disgust, yet boldly still,  
The cause of piety and sacred truth,  
And virtue, and those scenes, which God ordained  
Should best secure them, and promote them most ;  
Scenes that I love, and with regret perceive  
Forsaken, or through folly not enjoyed.  
Pure is the nymph, though liberal of her smiles,  
And chaste, though unconfined, whom I extol.  
Not as the prince in Shushan, when he called,  
Vainglorious of her charms, his Vashti forth,  
To grace the full pavilion. His design  
Was but to boast his own peculiar good,  
Which all might view with envy, none partake.  
My charmer is not mine alone ; my sweets,  
And she that sweetens all my bitters too,  
Nature, enchanting Nature, in whose form



And lineaments divine I trace a hand  
That errs not, and find raptures still renewed,  
Is free to all men—universal prize.  
Strange that so fair a creature should yet want  
Admirers, and be destined to divide  
With meaner objects e'en the few she finds!  
Stripped of her ornaments, her leaves and flowers,  
She loses all her influence. Cities then  
Attract us, and neglected nature pines  
Abandoned, as unworthy of our love.  
But are not wholesome airs, though unperfumed  
By roses; and clear suns, though scarcely felt;  
And groves, if unharmonious, yet secure  
From clamour, and whose very silence charms;  
To be preferred to smoke, to the eclipse,  
That metropolitan volcanoes make,  
Whose Stygian throats breathe darkness all day long;  
And to the stir of Commerce, driving slow,  
And thundering loud, with his ten thousand wheels?  
They would be, were not madness in the head,  
And folly in the heart; were England now,  
What England was, plain, hospitable, kind,  
And undebauched. But we have bid farewell  
To all the virtues of those better days,  
And all their honest pleasures. Mansions once  
Knew their own masters; and laborious hinds,  
Who had survived the father, served the son.  
Now the legitimate and rightful lord  
Is but a transient guest, newly arrived,  
As soon to be supplanted. He, that saw  
His patrimonial timber cast its leaf,  
Sells the last scantling, and transfers the price  
To some shrewd sharper, ere it buds again.  
Estates are landscapes, gazed upon a while,

Then advertised, and auctioneered away.  
The country starves, and they that feed the o'er-  
charged  
And surfeited lewd town with her fair dues,  
By a just judgment strip and starve themselves.  
The wings, that waft our riches out of sight,  
Grow on the gamester's elbows ; and the alert  
And nimble motion of those restless joints,  
That never tire, soon fans them all away.  
Improvement too, the idol of the age,  
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes !  
The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears !  
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode  
Of our forefathers—a grave whiskered race,  
But tasteless. Springs a palace in its stead,  
But in a distant spot ; where more exposed  
It may enjoy the advantage of the north,  
And aguish east, till time shall have transformed  
Those naked acres to a sheltering grove.  
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn ;  
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise ;  
And streams, as if created for his use,  
Pursue the track of his directing wand,  
Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow,  
Now murmuring soft, now roaring in cascades—  
E'en as he bids ! The enraptured owner smiles.  
'Tis finished, and yet, finished as it seems,  
Still wants a grace, the loveliest it could show,  
A mine to satisfy the enormous cost.  
Drained to the last poor item of his wealth,  
He sighs, departs, and leaves the accomplished plan,  
That he has touched, retouched, many a long day  
Labour'd, and many a night pursued in dreams,  
Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heaven

He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy !  
And now perhaps the glorious hour is come,  
When, having no stake left, no pledge to endear  
Her interests, or that gives her sacred cause  
A moment's operation on his love,  
He burns with most intense and flagrant zeal  
To serve his country. Ministerial grace  
Deals him out money from the public chest ;  
Or, if that mine be shut, some private purse  
Supplies his need with a usurious loan,  
To be refunded duly, when his vote  
Well-managed shall have earned its worthy price.  
O innocent, compared with arts like these,  
Crape, and cocked pistol, and the whistling ball  
Sent through the traveller's temples ! He that finds  
One drop of Heaven's sweet mercy in his cup,  
Can dig, beg, rot, and perish, well content,  
So he may wrap himself in honest rags  
At his last gasp ; but could not for a world  
Fish up his dirty and dependent bread  
From pools and ditches of the commonwealth,  
Sordid and sickening at his own success.

Ambition, avarice, penury incurred  
By endless riot, vanity, the lust  
Of pleasure and variety, despatch,  
As duly as the swallows disappear,  
The world of wandering knights and squires to town.  
London ingulfs them all ! The shark is there,  
And the shark's prey ; the spendthrift, and the leech  
That sucks him ; there the sycophant, and he  
Who, with bareheaded and obsequious bows,  
Begs a warm office, doomed to a cold jail  
And groat per diem, if his patron frown.  
The levee swarms, as if in golden pomp

Were characterized on every statesman's door,  
"BATTERED AND BANKRUPT FORTUNES MENDED  
HERE."

These are the charms that sully and eclipse  
The charms of nature. 'Tis the cruel gripe,  
That lean, hard-handed Poverty inflicts,  
The hope of better things, the chance to win,  
The wish to shine, the thirst to be amused,  
That at the sound of Winter's hoary wing  
Unpeople all our countries of such herds  
Of fluttering, loitering, cringing, begging, loose,  
And wanton vagrants, as make London, vast  
And boundless as it is, a crowded coop.

O thou, resort and mart of all the earth,  
Checked with all complexions of mankind,  
And spotted with all crimes ; in whom I see  
Much that I love, and more that I admire,  
And all that I abhor ; thou freckled fair,  
That pleasest and yet shock'st me, I can laugh,  
And I can weep, can hope, and can despond,  
Feel wrath and pity, when I think on thee !  
Ten righteous would have saved a city once,  
And thou hast many righteous.—Well for thee—  
That salt preserves thee ; more corrupted else,  
And therefore more obnoxious, at this hour,  
Than Sodom in her day had power to be,  
For whom God heard his Abraham plead in vain.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK IV.

### THE WINTER EVENING.

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#### *Argument of the Fourth Book.*

The post comes in.—The newspaper is read.—The world contemplated at a distance.—Address to Winter.—The rural amusements of a winter evening compared with the fashionable ones.—Address to Evening.—A brown study.—Fall of snow in the evening.—The waggoner.—A poor family-piece.—The rural thief.—Public houses.—The multitude of them censured.—The farmer's daughter: what she was—what she is.—The simplicity of country manners almost lost.—Causes of the change.—Desertion of the country by the rich.—Neglect of magistrates.—The militia principally in fault.—The new recruit and his transformation.—Reflection on bodies corporate.—The love of rural objects natural to all, and never to be totally extinguished.

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HARK! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder bridge,  
That with its wearisome but needful length  
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon  
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright;—  
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,  
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen locks;  
News from all nations lumbering at his back.  
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,  
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern  
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;  
And, having dropped the expected bag, pass on.  
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,  
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief

Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some ;  
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.  
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,  
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet  
With tears, that trickled down the writer's cheeks  
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,  
Or charged with am'rous sighs of absent swains,  
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect  
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.  
But O the important budget ! ushered in  
With such heart-shaking music, who can say  
What are its tidings ? have our troops awaked ?  
Or do they still, as if with opium drugged,  
Snore to the murmurs of the Atlantic wave ?  
Is India free ? and does she wear her plumed  
And jewelled turban with a smile of peace,  
Or do we grind her still ? The grand debate,  
The popular harangue, the tart reply,  
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,  
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all ;  
I burn to set the imprisoned wranglers free,  
And give them voice and utterance once again.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn  
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,  
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each,  
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.  
Not such his evening, who with shining face  
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and, squeezed  
And bored with elbow-points through both his sides,  
Outscolds the ranting actor on the stage ;  
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,  
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath

Of patriots, bursting with heroic rage,  
Or placemen, all tranquillity and smiles.  
This folio of four pages, happy work !  
Which not e'en critics criticise ; that holds  
Inquisitive Attention, while I read,  
Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,  
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break ;  
What is it, but a map of busy life,  
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns ?  
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge,  
That tempts Ambition. On the summit see  
The seals of office glitter in his eyes ;  
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them ! At his heels,  
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,  
And with a dexterous jerk, soon twists him down,  
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn  
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft  
Meanders lubricate the course they take ;  
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved  
To engross a moment's notice ; and yet begs,  
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,  
However trivial all that he conceives.  
Sweet bashfulness ! it claims at least this praise ;  
The dearth of information and good sense,  
That it foretells us, always comes to pass.  
Cataracts of declamation thunder here ;  
There forests of no meaning spread the page,  
In which all comprehension wanders lost :  
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there  
With merry descants on a nation's woes.  
The rest appears a wilderness of strange  
But gay confusion ; roses for the cheeks,  
And lilies for the brows of faded age ;  
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,

Heaven, earth, and ocean, plundered of their sweets,  
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,  
Sermons, and city feasts, and favourite airs,  
Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,  
And Katerfelto, with his hair on end  
At his own wonders, wondering for his bread.  
-'Tis pleasant, through the loopholes of retreat,  
To peep at such a world; to see the stir  
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;  
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates  
At a safe distance, where the dying sound  
Falls a soft murmur on the uninjured ear.  
Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease  
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced  
To some secure and more than mortal height,  
That liberates and exempts me from them all.  
It turns submitted to my view, turns round  
With all its generations; I behold  
The tumult, and am still. The sound of war  
Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;  
Grieves, but alarms me not. I mourn the pride  
And avarice, that make man a wolf to man;  
Hear the faint echo of those brazen throats,  
By which he speaks the language of his heart,  
And sigh, but never tremble at the sound.  
He travels and expatiates; as the bee  
From flower to flower, so he from land to land;  
The manners, customs, policy, of all  
Pay contribution to the store he gleans;  
He sucks intelligence in every clime,  
And spreads the honey of his deep research  
At his return—a rich repast for me.  
He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,  
Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes



Discover countries, with a kindred heart  
Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes;  
While fancy, like the finger of a clock,  
Runs the great circuit, and is still at home.

O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,  
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,  
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks  
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows  
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,  
A leafless branch thy sceptre and thy throne  
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,  
But urged by storms along its slippery way,  
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,  
And dreaded as thou art! Thou hold'st the sun  
A prisoner in the yet undawning east,  
Shortening his journey between morn and noon,  
And hurrying him, impatient of his stay,  
Down to the rosy west; but kindly still  
Compensating his loss with added hours  
Of social converse, and instructive ease,  
And gathering, at short notice, in one groupe  
The family dispersed, and fixing thought,  
Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.  
I crown thee king of intimate delights,  
Fire-side enjoyments, homeborn happiness,  
And all the comforts, that the lowly roof  
Of undisturbed Retirement, and the hours  
Of long uninterrupted evening, know.  
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;  
No powdered pert, proficient in the art  
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors  
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds  
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,  
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:

But here the needle plies its busy task,  
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flower,  
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,  
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,  
And curling tendrils, gracefully disposed,  
Follow the nimble finger of the fair;  
A wreath, that cannot fade, of flowers, that blow  
With most success when all besides decay.  
The poet's or historian's page by one  
Made vocal for the amusement of the rest;  
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds  
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;  
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,  
And in the charming strife triumphant still;  
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge  
On female industry: the threaded steel  
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.  
The volume closed, the customary rites  
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal;  
Such as the mistress of the world once found  
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,  
Perhaps, by moonlight, at their humble doors,  
And under an old oak's domestic shade,  
Enjoyed, spare feast! a radish and an egg.  
Discourse ensures, not trivial, yet not dull,  
Nor such as with a frown forbids the play  
Of fancy, or proscribes the sound of mirth:  
Nor do we madly, like an impious world,  
Who deem religion frenzy, and the God  
That made them, an intruder on their joys,  
Start at his awful name, or deem his praise  
A jarring note. Themes of a graver tone,  
Exciting oft our gratitude and love,  
While we retrace with Memory's pointing wand,

That calls the past to our exact review,  
The dangers we have 'scaped, the broken snare,  
The disappointed foe, deliverance found  
Unlooked for, life preserved, and peace restored,  
Fruits of omnipotent eternal love.

O evenings worthy of the gods! exclaimed  
The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,  
More to be prized and coveted than yours,  
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,  
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.

Is Winter hideous in a garb like this?  
Needs he the tragic fur, the smoke of lamps,  
The pent-up breath of an unsavoury throng,  
To thaw him into feeling; or the smart  
And snappish dialogue, that flippant wits  
Call comedy, to prompt him with a smile?  
The self-complacent actor, when he views  
(Stealing a sidelong glance at a full house)  
The slope of faces from the floor to the roof,  
(As if one master-spring controlled them all)  
Relaxed into an universal grin,  
Sees not a count'nance there that speaks of joy  
Half so refined or so sincere as ours.  
Cards were superfluous here, with all the tricks  
That idleness has ever yet contrived  
To fill the void of an unfurnished brain,  
To palliate dulness, and give time a shove.  
Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing,  
Unsoiled, and swift, and of a silken sound;  
But the world's Time is Time in masquerade!  
Theirs, should I paint him, has his pinions fledged  
With motley plumes; and, where the peacock shows  
His azure eyes, is tinctured black and red  
With spots quadrangular of diamond form.

Ensanguined hearts, clubs typical of strife,  
And spades, the emblem of untimely graves.  
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,  
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard-mace  
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.  
Thus decked, he charms a world whom fashion blinds  
To his true worth, most pleased when idle most ;  
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.  
E'en misses, at whose age their mothers wore  
The backstring and the bib, assume the dress  
Of womanhood, fit pupils in the school  
Of card-devoted Time, and night by night  
Placed at some vacant corner of the board,  
Learn every trick, and soon play all the game.  
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,  
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed ?  
As he that travels far oft turns aside,  
To view some rugged rock or mouldering tower,  
Which seen delights him not ; then coming home  
Describes and prints it, that the world may know  
How far he went for what was nothing worth ;  
So I, with brush in hand, and palette spread  
With colours mixed for a far different use,  
Paint cards, and dolls, and every idle thing,  
That Fancy finds in her excursive flights.  
Come, Evening, once again, season of peace ;  
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long !  
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,  
With matron step slow moving, while the Night  
Treads on thy sweeping train ; one hand employed  
In letting fall the curtain of repose  
On bird and beast, the other charged for man  
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day :  
Not sumptuously adorned, not needing aid,

Like homely-featured Night, of clustering gems ;  
A star or two, just twinkling on thy brow,  
Suffices thee ; save that the moon is thine  
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high  
With ostentatious pageantry, but set  
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,  
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.  
Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary calm,  
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift :  
And whether I devote thy gentle hours  
To books, to music, or the poet's toil ;  
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit ;  
Or twining silken threads, round ivory reels,  
When they command whom man was born to please,  
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.

Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze  
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied  
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,  
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk  
Whole without stooping, towering crest and all,  
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps  
The glowing hearth may satisfy a while  
With faint illumination, that uplifts  
The shadows to the ceiling, there by fits  
Dancing uncouthly to the quivering flame.  
Not undelightful is an hour to me  
So spent in parlour-twilight : such a gloom  
Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,  
The mind contemplative, with some new theme  
Pregnant, or indisposed alike to all.  
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial powers,  
That never felt a stupor, know no pause,  
Nor need one ; I am conscious, and confess  
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.

Me oft has Fancy ludicrous and wild  
Soothed with a waking dream of houses, towers,  
Trees, churches, and strange visages, expressed  
In the red cinders, while with poring eye  
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.  
Nor less amused, have I quiescent watched  
The sooty films that play upon the bars  
Pendulous, and foreboding in the view  
Of superstition, prophesying still,  
Though still deceived, some stranger's near approach.  
'Tis thus the understanding takes repose  
In indolent vacuity of thought,  
And sleeps, and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face  
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask  
Of deep deliberation, as the man  
Were tasked to his full strength, absorbed and lost.  
Thus oft, reclined at ease, I lose an hour  
At evening, till at length the freezing blast,  
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons home  
The recollected powers; and snapping short  
The glassy threads, with which the fancy weaves  
Her brittle toils, restores me to myself.  
How calm is my recess; and how the frost,  
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear  
The silence and the warmth enjoyed within!  
I saw the woods and fields at close of day  
A variegated show; the meadows green,  
Though faded; and the lands where lately waved  
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,  
Upturned so lately by the forceful share.  
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile  
With verdure not unprofitable, grazed  
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each  
His favourite herb; while all the leafless groves

That skirt the horizon, wore a sable hue,  
Scarce noticed in the kindred dusk of eve.  
To-morrow brings a change, a total change  
Which even now, though silently performed,  
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face  
Of universal nature undergoes.  
Fast falls a fleecy shower! the downy flakes  
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,  
Softly alighting upon all below,  
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives  
Gladly the thickening mantle: and the green  
And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast,  
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.

In such a world, so thorny, and where none  
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,  
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,  
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin  
Against the law of love, to measure lots  
With less distinguished than ourselves; that thus  
We may with patience bear our moderate ills,  
And sympathize with others suffering more.  
Ill fares the traveller now, and he that stalks  
In pond'rous boots beside his reeking team.  
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore  
By congregated loads adhering close  
To the clogged wheels; and in its sluggish pace  
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.  
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,  
While every breath, by respiration strong  
Forced downward, is consolidated soon  
Upon their jutting chests. He, formed to bear  
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,  
With half-shut eyes, and puckered cheeks, and teeth  
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.

One hand secures his hat, save when with both,  
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,  
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.  
O happy, and in my account denied  
That sensibility of pain, with which  
Refinement is endued, thrice happy thou!  
Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed  
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpaired.  
The learned finger never need explore  
Thy vig'rous pulse; and the unhealthful east  
That breathes the spleen, and searches every bone  
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.  
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;  
Thy waggon is thy wife; and the poor beasts,  
That drag the dull companion to and fro,  
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.  
Ah treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,  
Yet show that thou hast mercy! which the great,  
With needless hurry whirled from place to place,  
Humane as they would seem, not always show.

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,  
Such claim compassion in a night like this,  
And have a friend in every feeling heart.  
Warmed, while it lasts, by labour, all day long  
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,  
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.  
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights  
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,  
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.  
The few small embers left she nurses well;  
And, while her infant race, with outspread hands,  
And crowded knees sit cowering o'er the sparks,  
Retires, content to quake, so they be warmed.  
The man feels least, as more inured than she



To winter, and the current in his veins  
More briskly moved by his severer toil;  
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.  
The taper soon extinguished, which I saw  
Dangled along at the cold finger's end  
Just when the day declined; and the brown loaf  
Lodged on the shelf, half-eaten without sauce  
Of savory cheese, or butter, costlier still;  
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas,  
Where penury is felt, the thought is chained,  
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few!  
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care  
Ingenious Parsimony takes, but just  
Saves the small inventory, bed, and stool,  
Skillet, and old carved chest, from public sale.  
They live, and live without extorted alms  
From grudging hands; but other boast have none,  
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg,  
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.  
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,  
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far  
A dry but independent crust, hard-earned,  
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure  
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs  
Of knaves in office, partial in the work  
Of distribution; liberal of their aid  
To clam'rous Importunity in rags,  
But oftentimes deaf to suppliants, who would blush  
To wear a tattered garb however coarse,  
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth:  
These ask with painful shyness, and, refused  
Because deserving, silently retire!  
But be ye of good courage! Time itself  
Shall much befriend you. Time shall give increase;

And all your numerous progeny, well-trained  
But helpless, in few years shall find their hands,  
And labour too. Meanwhile ye shall not want  
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,  
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.  
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor  
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

But poverty with most, who whimper forth  
Their long complaints, is self-inflicted woe ;  
The effect of laziness or sottish waste.  
Now goes the nightly thief prowling abroad  
For plunder ; much solicitous how best  
He may compensate for a day of sloth  
By works of darkness and nocturnal wrong.  
Woe to the gardener's pale, the farmer's hedge,  
Plashed neatly, and secured with driven stakes  
Deep in the loamy bank. Uptorn by strength,  
Resistless in so bad a cause, but lame  
To better deeds, he bundles up the spoil,  
An ass's burden, and, when laden most  
And heaviest, light of foot steals fast away.  
Nor does the boarded hovel better guard  
The well-stalk'd pile of riven logs and roots  
From his pernicious force. Nor will he leave  
Unwrenched the door, however well secured,  
Where Chanticleer amidst his haram sleeps  
In unsuspecting pomp. 'Twitched from the perch,  
He gives the princely bird, with all his wives,  
To his voracious bag, struggling in vain,  
And loudly wondering at the sudden change.  
Nor this to feed his own. 'Twere some excuse,  
Did pity of their sufferings warp aside  
His principle, and tempt him into sin  
For their support, so destitute. But they

Neglected pine at home ; themselves, as more  
Exposed than others, with less scruple made  
His victims, robbed of their defenceless all.  
Cruel is all he does. 'Tis quenchless thirst  
Of ruinous ebriety, that prompts  
His every action, and imbrates the man.  
O for a law to noose the villain's neck,  
Who starves his own ; who persecutes the blood  
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates  
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love !

Pass where we may, through city or through town,  
Village, or hamlet, of this merry land,  
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace  
Conducts the unguarded nose to such a whiff  
Of stale debauch, forth issuing from the styes  
That Law has licensed, as makes Temperance reel.  
There sit, involved and lost in curling clouds  
Of Indian fume, and guzzling deep, the boor,  
The lackey, and the groom : The craftsman there  
Takes a Lethean leave of all his toil ;  
Smith, cobbler, joiner, he that plies the shears,  
And he that kneads the dough ; all loud alike,  
All learned, and all drunk ! The fiddle screams  
Plaintive and piteous, as it wept and wail'd  
Its wasted tones and harmony unheard :  
Fierce the dispute whate'er the theme ; while she,  
Fell Discord, arbitress of such debate,  
Perch'd on the signpost, holds with even hand  
Her undecisive scales. In this she lays  
A weight of ignorance ; in that, of pride ;  
And smiles delighted with the eternal poise.  
Dire is the frequent curse, and its twin sound,  
The cheek-distending oath, not to be praised  
As ornamental, musical, polite,

Like those, which modern senators employ,  
Whose oath is rhetoric, and who swear for fame  
Behold the schools, in which plebeian minds  
Once simple, are initiated in arts,  
Which some may practise with politer grace,  
But none with readier skill!—'tis here they learn  
The road, that leads from competence and peace  
To indigence and rapine; till at last  
Society, grown weary of the load,  
Shakes her encumbered lap, and casts them out.  
But censure profits little: vain the attempt  
To advertise in verse a public pest,  
That, like the filth with which the peasant feeds  
His hungry acres, stinks, and is of use.  
The excise is fattened with the rich result  
Of all this riot; and ten thousand casks,  
For ever dribbling out their base contents.  
Touched by the Midas finger of the state,  
Bleed gold for ministers to sport away.  
Drink, and be mad then; 'tis your country bids!  
Gloriously drunk obey the important call!  
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;—  
Ye all can swallow, and she asks no more.

Would I had fallen upon those happier days,  
That poet's celebrate; those golden times,  
And those Arcadian scenes that Maro sings,  
And Sidney, warbler of poetic prose.  
Nymphs were Dianas then, and swains had hearts,  
That felt their virtues: Innocence, it seems,  
From courts dismissed, found shelter in the groves;  
The footsteps of Simplicity, impressed  
Upon the yielding herbage, (so they sing)  
Then were not all effaced: then speech profane,  
And manners profligate, were rarely found,

Observed as prodigies, and soon reclaimed.  
Vain wish! those days were never: airy dreams  
Sat for the picture: and the poet's hand,  
Imparting substance to an empty shade.  
Imposed a gay delirium for a truth.  
Grant it: I still must envy them an age,  
That favoured such a dream; in days like these  
Impossible, when Virtue is so scarce,  
That to suppose a scene where she presides,  
Is tramontane, and stumbles all belief.  
No: we are polished now. The rural lass,  
Whom once her virgin modesty and grace,  
Her artless manners, and her neat attire,  
So dignified, that she was hardly less  
Than the fair shepherdess of old romance,  
Is seen no more. The character is lost!  
Her head, adorned with lappets pined aloft,  
And ribands streaming gay, superbly raised,  
And magnified beyond all human size.  
Indebted to some smart wig-weaver's hand  
For more than half the tressess it sustains;  
Her elbows ruffled, and her tottering form  
Ill-propped upon French heels; she might be deemed  
(But that the basket dangling on her arm  
Interprets her more truly) of a rank  
Too proud for dairy-work, or sale of eggs.  
Expect her soon with foot-boy at her heels,  
No longer blushing for her awkward load,  
Her train and her umbrella all her care!

The town has tinged the country; and the stain  
Appears a spot upon a vestal's robe,  
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs  
Down into scenes still rural: but, alas,  
Scenes rarely graced with rural manners now!

Time was when in the pastoral retreat  
The unguarded door was safe ; men did not watch  
To invade another's right, or guard their own.  
Then sleep was undisturbed by fear, unscared  
By drunken howlings ; and the chilling tale  
Of midnight murder was a wonder heard  
With doubtful credit, told to frighten babes.  
But farewell now to unsuspecting nights,  
And slumbers unalarmed ! Now, ere you sleep,  
See that your polished arms be primed with care,  
And drop the nightbolt ; ruffians are abroad ;  
And the first larum of the cock's shrill throat  
May prove a trumpet, summoning your ear  
To horrid sounds of hostile feet within.  
Even daylight has its dangers ; and the walk  
Through pathless wastes and woods, unconscious once  
Of other tenants than melodious birds,  
Or harmless flocks, is hazardous and bold.  
Lamented change ! to which full many a cause  
Inveterate, hopeless of a cure, conspires.  
The course of human things from good to ill,  
From ill to worse, is fatal, never fails.  
Increase of power begets increase of wealth ;  
Wealth luxury, and luxury excess ;  
Excess the scrofulous and itchy plague,  
That seizes first the opulent, descends  
To the next rank contagious, and in time  
Taints downward all the graduated scale  
Of order, from the chariot to the plough.  
The rich, and they that have an arm to check  
The license of the lowest in degree,  
Desert their office ; and themselves, intent  
On pleasure, haunt the capital, and thus  
To all the violence of lawless hands

Resign the scenes their presence might protect.  
Authority herself not seldom sleeps,  
Though resident, and witness of the wrong.  
The plump convivial parson often bears  
The magisterial sword in vain, and lays  
His reverence and his worship both to rest  
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.  
Perhaps timidity restrains his arm ;  
When he should strike he trembles, and sets free,  
Himself enslaved by terror of the band,  
The audacious convict, whom he dares not bind.  
Perhaps, though by profession ghostly pure,  
He too may have his vice, and sometimes prove  
Less dainty than becomes his grave outside  
In lucrative concerns. Example well  
His milkwhite hand ; the palm is hardly clean—  
But here and there an ugly smutch appears.  
Foh ! 'twas a bribe that left it : he has touched  
Corruption. Whoso seeks an audit here  
Propitious, pays his tribute, game or fish,  
Wild-fowl or venison ; and his errand speeds.

But faster far, and more than all the rest,  
A noble cause, which none, who bears a spark  
Of public virtue, ever wished removed,  
Works the deplored and mischievous effect.  
'Tis universal soldiership has stabbed  
The heart of merit in the meaner class.  
Arms, through the vanity and brainless rage  
Of those that bear them, in whatever cause,  
Seem most at variance with all moral good,  
And incompatible with serious thought.  
The clown, the child of nature, without guile,  
Blest with an infant's ignorance of all  
But his own simple pleasures ; now and then

A wrestling match, a footrace, or a fair ;  
Is balloted, and trembles at the news :  
Sheepish he doffs his hat, and mumbling swears  
A bible oath to be whate'er they please,  
To do he knows not what. The task performed,  
That instant he becomes the serjeant's care,  
His pupil, and his torment, and his jest.  
His awkward gait, his introverted toes,  
Bent knees, round shoulders, and dejected looks,  
Procure him many a curse. By slow degrees,  
Unapt to learn, and formed of stubborn stuff,  
He yet by slow degrees puts off himself,  
Grows conscious of a change, and likes it well :  
He stands erect ; his slouch becomes a walk ;  
He steps right onward, martial in his air,  
His form, and movement ; is as smart above  
As meal and larded locks can make him ; wears  
His hat, or his plumed helmet, with a grace ;  
And, his three years of heroship expired,  
Returns indignant to the slighted plough.  
He hates the field, in which no fife or drum  
Attends him ; drives his cattle to a march ;  
And sighs for the smart comrades he has left.  
'Twere well if his exterior change were all—  
But with his clumsy port the wretch has lost  
His ignorance and harmless manners too.  
To swear, to game, to drink ; to show at home  
By lewdness, idleness, and Sabbath-breach,  
The great proficiency he made abroad ;  
To astonish and to grieve his gazing friends,  
To break some maiden's and his mother's heart ;  
To be a pest where he was useful once ;  
Are his sole aim, and all his glory, now.

Man in society is like a flower



Blown in its native bed: 'tis there alone  
His faculties, expanded in full bloom,  
Shine out; there only reach their proper use.  
But man, associated and leagued with man  
By regal warrant, or self-joined by bond  
For interest-sake, or swarming into clans  
Beneath one head, for purposes of war,  
Like flowers selected from the rest, and bound  
And bundled close to fill some crowded vase,  
Fades rapidly, and, by compression marred,  
Contracts defilement not to be endured.  
Hence chartered boroughs are such public plagues;  
And burghers, men immaculate perhaps  
In all their private functions, once combined,  
Become a loathsome body, only fit  
For dissolution hurtful to the main.  
Hence merchants, unimpeachable of sin  
Against the charities of domestic life,  
Incorporated, seem at once to lose  
Their nature; and, disclaiming all regard  
For mercy and the common rights of man,  
Build factories with blood, conducting trade  
At the sword's point, and dyeing the white robe  
Of innocent commercial Justice red.  
Hence too the field of glory, as the world  
Misdeems it, dazzled by its bright array,  
With all its majesty of thundering pomp,  
Enchanting music and immortal wreaths,  
Is but a school, where thoughtlessness is taught  
On principle, where foppery atones  
For folly, gallantry for every vice.

But slighted as it is, and by the great  
Abandoned, and, which still I more regret,  
Infected with the manners and the modes

It knew not once, the country wins me still.  
I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,  
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss,  
But there I laid the scene. There early strayed  
My fancy, ere yet liberty of choice  
Had found me, or the hope of being free.  
My very dreams were rural; rural too  
The youthful efforts of my youthful muse,  
Sportive and jingling her poetic bells,  
Ere yet her ear was mistress of their powers.  
No bard could please me but whose lyre was tuned  
To Nature's praises. Heroes and their feats  
Fatigued me, never weary of the pipe  
Of Tityrus, assembling, as he sang,  
The rustic throng beneath his favourite beech.  
Then Milton had indeed a poet's charms:  
New to my taste his Paradise surpassed  
The struggling efforts of my boyish tongue,  
To speak its excellence. I danced for joy.  
I marvelled much, that, at so ripe an age  
As twice seven years, his beauties had then first  
Engaged my wonder; and admiring still,  
And still admiring, with regret supposed  
The joy half lost, because not sooner found.  
There too enamoured of the life I loved,  
Pathetic in its praise, in its pursuit  
Determined, and possessing it at last  
With transports, such as favoured lovers feel,  
I studied, prized, and wished that I had known  
Ingenious Cowley! and, though now reclaimed  
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,  
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit  
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools.  
I still revere thee, courtly though retired:

Though stretched at ease in Chertsey's silent bowers,  
Not unemployed ; and finding rich amends  
For a lost world in solitude and verse.  
'Tis born with all : the love of Nature's works  
Is an ingredient in the compound man,  
Infused at the creation of the kind.  
And, though the Almighty Maker has throughout  
Discriminated each from each, by strokes  
And touches of his hand, with so much art  
Diversified, that two were never found  
Twins at all points—yet this obtains in all,  
That all discern a beauty in his works,  
And all can taste them : minds, that have been formed  
And tutor'd, with a relish more exact,  
But none without some relish, none unmoved.  
It is a flame, that dies not even there,  
Where nothing feeds it ; neither business, crowds  
Nor habits of luxurious city-life,  
Whatever else they smother of true worth  
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.  
The villas with which London stands begirt,  
Like a swarth Indian, with his belt of beads,  
Prove it. A breath of unadulterate air,  
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer  
The citizen, and brace his languid frame !  
Even in the stifling bosom of the town  
A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms  
That sooth the rich possessor ; much consoled,  
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,  
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well  
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint,  
That Nature lives ; that sight-refreshing green  
Is still the livery she delights to wear,  
Though sickly samples of the exuberant whole.

What are the casements lined with creeping herbs,  
The prouder sashes fronted with a range  
Of orange, myrtle, or the fragrant weed,  
The Frenchman's darling?\* are they not all proofs,  
That man, immured in cities, still retains  
His inborn, inextinguishable thirst  
Of rural scenes, compensating his loss  
By supplemental shifts, the best he may?  
The most unfurnished with the means of life,  
And they, that never pass their brick-wall bounds,  
To range the fields, and treat their lungs with air,  
Yet feel the burning instinct; over head  
Suspend their crazy boxes, planted thick  
And watered duly. There the pitcher stands  
A fragment, and the spoutless tea-pot there;  
Sad witnesses how close-pent man regrets  
The country, with what ardour he contrives  
A peep at Nature, when he can no more.

Hail, therefore, patroness of health and ease,  
And contemplation, heart-consoling joys,  
And harmless pleasures, in the throned abode  
Of multitudes unknown; hail, rural life!  
Address himself who will to the pursuit  
Of honours, or emolument, or fame;  
I shall not add myself to such a chase,  
Thwart his attempts, or envy his success.  
Some must be great. Great offices will have  
Great talents. And God gives to every man  
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,  
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall  
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill.  
To the deliverer of an injured land

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\* Mignonnette.

He gives a tongue to enlarge upon, a heart  
To feel, and courage to redress her wrongs ;  
To monarchs dignity ; to judges sense ;  
To artists ingenuity and skill ;  
To me, an unambitious mind, content  
In the low vale of life, that early felt  
A wish for ease and leisure, and ere long  
Found here that leisure, and that ease I wished.

# THE TASK.

## BOOK V.

### THE WINTER MORNING WALK.

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#### *Argument of the Fifth Book.*

A frosty morning.—The foddering of cattle.—The woodman and his dog.—The poultry.—Whimsical effects of frost at a waterfall.—The Empress of Russia's palace of ice.—Amusements of monarchs.—War, one of them.—Wars, whence.—And whence monarchy. The evils of it.—English and French loyalty contrasted.—The Bastile, and a prisoner there.—Liberty the chief recommendation of this country.—Modern patriotism questionable, and why.—The perishable nature of the best human institutions.—Spiritual liberty not perishable.—The slavish state of man by nature.—Deliver him, Deist, if you can.—Grace must do it.—The respective merits of patriots and martyrs stated.—Their different treatment.—Happy freedom of the man whom grace makes free.—His relish of the works of God.—Address to the Creator.

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'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb  
Ascending, fires the horizon; while the clouds  
That crowd away before the driving wind,  
More ardent as the disk emerges more,  
Resemble most some city in a blaze,  
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray  
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,  
And, tinging all with his own rosy hue,  
From every herb and every spiry blade  
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field.  
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,  
In spite of gravity, and sage remark  
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,

Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance  
I view the muscular proportioned limb  
Transformed to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,  
As they designed to mock me, at my side  
Take step for step; and, as I near approach  
The cottage, walk along the plastered wall,  
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.  
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep  
Beneath the dazzling deluge; and the bents  
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest,  
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine  
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,  
And fledged with icy feathers, nod superb,  
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence  
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep  
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait  
Their wonted fodder; not like hungering man,  
Fretful if unsupplied; but silent, meek,  
And patient of the slow-paced swain's delay.  
He from the stack carves out the accustomed load,  
Deep-plunging, and again deep-plunging oft,  
His broad keen knife into the solid mass:  
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands  
With such undeviating and even force  
He severs it away: no heedless care,  
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile  
Deciduous, or its own unbalanced weight.  
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned  
The cheerful haunts of man; to wield the axe,  
And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,  
From morn to eve his solitary task.  
Shaggy and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,  
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,  
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel

Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk  
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow  
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout ;  
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.  
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl  
Moves right toward the mark ; nor stops for aught,  
But now and then with pressure of his thumb  
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,  
That fumes beneath his nose : the trailing cloud  
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.  
Now from the roost, or from the neighbouring pale,  
Where, diligent to catch the first faint gleam  
Of smiling day, they gossip'd side by side,  
Come trooping at the housewife's well-known call  
The feathered tribes domestic. Half on wing,  
And half on foot, they brush the fleecy flood,  
Conscious and fearful of too deep a plunge.  
The sparrows peep, and quit the sheltering eaves,  
To seize the fair occasion ; well they eye  
The scattered grain, and thievishly resolved  
To escape the impending famine, often scared  
As oft return, a pert voracious kind.  
Clean riddance quickly made, one only care  
Remains to each, the search of sunny nook,  
Or shed impervious to the blast. Resigned  
To sad necessity, the cock foregoes  
His wonted strut ; and, wading at their head  
With well-considered steps, seems to resent  
His altered gait and stateliness retrenched.  
How find the myriads, that in summer cheer  
The hills and valleys with their ceaseless songs,  
Due sustenance, or where subsist they now ?  
Earth yields them nought ; the imprison'd worm is safe  
Beneath the frozen clod ; all seeds of herbs



Lie covered close ; and berry-bearing thorns,  
That feed the thrush, (whatever some suppose)  
Afford the smaller minstrels no supply.  
The long protracted rigour of the year  
Thins all their numerous flocks. In chinks and holes  
Ten thousand seek an unmolested end,  
As instinct prompts ; self-buried ere they die.  
The very rooks and daws forsake the fields,  
Where neither grub, nor root, nor earth-nut, now  
Repays their labour more ; and perched aloft'  
By the wayside, or stalking in the path,  
Lean pensioners upon the traveller's track,  
Pick up their nauseous dole, though sweet to them,  
Of voided pulse or half-digested grain.  
The streams are lost amid the splendid blank,  
O'erwhelming all distinction. On the flood,  
Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight  
Lies undissolved ; while silently beneath,  
And unperceived, the current steals away.  
Not so where, scornful of a check, it leaps  
The milldam, dashes on the restless wheel,  
And wantons in the pebbly gulf below :  
No frost can bind it there ; its utmost force  
Can but arrest the light and smoky mist,  
That in its fall the liquid sheet throws wide.  
And see where it has hung the embroidered banks  
With forms so various, that no powers of art,  
The pencil or the pen, may trace the scene !  
Here glittering turrets rise, upbearing high  
(Fantastic misarrangement!) on the roof,  
Large growth of what may seem the sparkling trees  
And shrubs of fairy land. The crystal drops,  
That trickle down the branches, fast congealed,  
Shoot into pillars of pellucid length,

And prop the pile they but adorned before.  
Here grotto within grotto safe defies  
The sunbeam ; there, embossed and fretted wild,  
The growing wonder takes a thousand shapes  
Capricious, in which fancy seeks in vain  
The likeness of some object seen before.  
Thus Nature works as if to mock at Art,  
And in defiance of her rival powers ;  
By these fortuitous and random strokes  
Performing such inimitable feats  
As she with all her rules can never reach.  
Less worthy of applause, though more admired,  
Because a novelty, the work of man,  
Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,  
Thy most magnificent and mighty freak,  
The wonder of the North. No forest fell,  
When thou wouldst build ; no quarry sent its stores  
T' enrich thy walls : but thou didst hew the floods,  
And make thy marble of the glassy wave.  
In such a palace Aristæus found  
Cyrene, when he bore the plaintive tale  
Of his lost bees to her maternal ear ;  
In such a palace Poetry might place  
The armory of Winter ; where his troops,  
The gloomy clouds, find weapons, arrowy sleet,  
Skin-piercing volley, blossom-bruising hail,  
And snow, that often blinds the traveller's course,  
And wraps him in an unexpected tomb.  
Silently as a dream the fabric rose ;  
No sound of hammer or of saw was there :  
Ice upon ice, the well-adjusted parts  
Were soon conjoined, nor other cement asked  
Than water interfused to make them one.  
Lamps gracefully disposed, and of all hues,

Illumined every side ; a watery light  
 Gleamed through the clear transparency, that seemed  
 Another moon new risen, or meteor fallen  
 From Heaven to Earth, of lambent flame serene.  
 So stood the brittle prodigy ; though smooth  
 And slippery the materials, yet frost-bound  
 Firm as a rock. Nor wanted aught within,  
 That royal residence might well befit,  
 For grandeur or for use. Long wavy wreaths  
 Of flowers, that feared no enemy but warmth,  
 Blushed on the pannels. Mirror needed none  
 Where all was vitreous ; but in order due  
 Convivial table and commodious seat  
 (What seemed at least commodious seat) were there ;  
 Sofa, and couch, and high-built thrones august.  
 The same lubricity was found in all,  
 And all was moist to the warm touch ; a scene  
 Of evanescent glory, once a stream,  
 And soon to slide into a stream again.  
 Alas ! 'twas but a mortifying stroke  
 Of undesigned severity, that glanced  
 (Made by a monarch) on her own estate,  
 On human grandeur and the courts of kings.  
 'Twas transient in its nature, as in show  
 'Twas durable ; as worthless, as it seemed  
 Intrinsically precious ; to the foot  
 Treacherous and false ; it smiled, and it was cold.

Great princes have great playthings. Some have  
 played

At hewing mountains into men, and some  
 At building human wonders mountain-high.  
 Some have amused the dull, sad years of life,  
 (Life spent in indolence, and therefore sad,)  
 With schemes of monumental fame ; and sought

By pyramids and mausolean pomp,  
Shortlived themselves, to immortalize their bones.  
Some seek diversion in the tented field,  
And make the sorrows of mankind their sport.  
But war's a game, which, were their subjects wise,  
Kings would not play at. Nations would do well  
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands  
Of heroes, whose infirm and baby minds  
Are gratified with mischief; and who spoil,  
Because men suffer it, their toy, the World.

When Babel was confounded, and the great  
Confederacy of projectors, wild and vain,  
Was split into diversity of tongues,  
Then, as a shepherd separates his flock,  
These to the upland, to the valley those,  
God drove asunder, and assigned their lot  
To all the nations. Ample was the boon  
He gave them, in its distribution fair  
And equal; and he bade them dwell in peace.  
Peace was awhile their care: they ploughed and sowed,  
And reaped their plenty without grudge or strife.  
But violence can never longer sleep,  
Than human passions please. In every heart  
Are sown the sparks that kindle fiery war;  
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze.  
Cain had already shed a brother's blood:  
The deluge washed it out; but left unquenched  
The seeds of murder in the breast of man.  
Soon by a righteous judgment in the line  
Of his descending progeny was found  
The first artificer of death; the shrewd  
Contriver, who first sweated at the forge,  
And forced the blunt and yet unblooded steel  
To a keen edge, and made it bright for war.

Him, Tubal named, the Vulcan of old times,  
The sword and falchion their inventor claim ;  
And the first smith was the first murderer's son.  
His art survived the waters ; and ere long,  
When man was multiplied and spread abroad  
In tribes and clans, and had begun to call  
These meadows and that range of hills his own,  
The tasted sweets of property begat  
Desire of more, and industry in some,  
To improve and cultivate their just demesne,  
Made others covet what they saw so fair.  
Thus war began on earth : these fought for spoil,  
And those in self-defence. Savage at first  
The onset, and irregular. At length  
One eminent above the rest for strength,  
For stratagem, for courage, or for all,  
Was chosen leader ; him they served in war,  
And him in peace, for sake of warlike deeds  
Reverenced no less. Who could with him compare ?  
Or who so worthy to control themselves,  
As he, whose prowess had subdued their foes ?  
Thus war, affording field for the display  
Of virtue, made one chief, whom times of peace,  
Which have their exigences too, and call  
For skill in government, at length made king.  
King was a name too proud for man to wear  
With modesty and meekness ; and the crown,  
So dazzling in their eyes, who set it on,  
Was sure to intoxicate the brows it bound  
It is the abject property of most,  
That, being parcel of the common mass,  
And destitute of means to raise themselves,  
They sink and settle lower than they need.  
They know not what it is to feel within

A comprehensive faculty, that grasps  
Great purposes with ease, that turns and wields  
Almost without an effort, plans too vast  
For their conception, which they cannot move.  
Conscious of impotence, they soon grow drunk  
With gazing, when they see an able man  
Step forth to notice; and, besotted thus,  
Build him a pedestal, and say, "Stand there,  
And be our admiration and our praise."  
They roll themselves before him in the dust,  
Then most deserving in their own account,  
When most extravagant in his applause,  
As if exalting him they raised themselves.  
Thus by degrees, self-cheated of their sound  
And sober judgment, that he is but man,  
They demideify and fume him so,  
That in due season he forgets it too.  
Inflated and astrut with self-conceit,  
He gulps the windy diet; and ere long,  
Adopting their mistake, profoundly thinks  
The World was made in vain, if not for him.  
Thenceforth they are his cattle: drudges, born  
To bear his burdens, drawing in his gears,  
And sweating in his service, his caprice  
Becomes the soul that animates them all.  
He deems a thousand, or ten thousand lives,  
Spent in the purchase of renown for him,  
An easy reck'ning; and they think the same.  
Thus kings were first invented, and thus kings  
Were burnished into heroes, and became  
The arbiters of this terraqueous swamp;  
Storks among frogs, that have but croaked and died  
Strange that such folly, as lifts bloated man  
To eminence fit only for a god,

Should ever drivel out of human lips,  
E'en in the cradled weakness of the World!  
Still stranger much, that when at length mankind  
Had reached the sinewy firmness of their youth,  
And could discriminate and argue well  
On subjects more mysterious, they were yet  
Babes in the cause of freedom, and should fear  
And quake before the gods themselves had made:  
But above measure strange, that neither proof  
Of sad experience, nor examples set  
By some, whose patriot virtue has prevailed,  
Can even now, when they are grown mature  
In wisdom, and with philosophic deeds  
Familiar, serve to emancipate the rest!  
Such dupes are men to custom, and so prone  
To reverence what is ancient, and can plead  
A course of long observance for its use,  
That even servitude, the worst of ills,  
Because delivered down from sire to son,  
Is kept and guarded as a sacred thing.  
But is it fit, or can it bear the shock  
Of rational discussion, that a man,  
Compounded and made up like other men  
Of elements tumultuous, in whom lust  
And folly in as ample measure meet,  
As in the bosoms of the slaves he rules,  
Should be a despot absolute, and boast  
Himself the only freeman of his land?  
Should, when he pleases, and on whom he will,  
Wage war, with any or with no pretence  
Of provocation given, or wrong sustained,  
And force the beggarly last doit, by means  
That his own humour dictates, from the clutch  
Of Poverty, that thus he may procure

His thousands, weary of penurious life,  
A splendid opportunity to die?  
Say ye, who (with less prudence than of old  
Jotham ascribed to his assembled trees  
In politic convention) put your trust  
I' th' shadow of a bramble, and reclined  
In fancied peace beneath his dangerous branch,  
Rejoice in him, and celebrate his sway,  
Where find ye passive fortitude? Whence springs  
Your self-denying zeal, that holds it good,  
To stroke the prickly grievance, and to hang  
His thorns with streamers of continual praise?  
We too are friends to loyalty. We love  
The king, who loves the law, respects his bounds,  
And reigns content with them: him we serve  
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free:  
But recollecting still that he is man,  
We trust him not too far. King though he be,  
And king in England too, he may be weak,  
And vain enough to be ambitious still;  
May exercise amiss his proper powers,  
Or covet more than freemen choose to grant:  
Beyond that mark is treason. He is ours,  
To administer, to guard, to adorn the state,  
But not to warp or change it. We are his,  
To serve him nobly in the common cause,  
True to the death, but not to be his slaves.  
Mark now the difference, ye that boast your love  
Of kings, between your loyalty and ours.  
We love the man, the paltry pageant you;  
We the chief patron of the commonwealth,  
You the regardless author of its woes:  
We for the sake of liberty a king,  
You chains and bondage for a tyrant's sake.



Our love is principle, and has its root  
 In reason, is judicious, manly, free ;  
 Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,  
 And licks the foot that treads it in the dust.  
 Were kingship as true treasure as it seems,  
 Sterling, and worthy of a wise man's wish,  
 I would not be a king to be beloved  
 Causeless, and daubed with undiscerning praise,  
 Where love is mere attachment to the throne,  
 Not to the man who fills it as he ought

Whose freedom is by suff'rance, and at will  
 Of a superior, he is never free.

Who lives, and is not weary of a life  
 Exposed to manacles, deserves them well.  
 The state, that strives for liberty, though foiled,  
 And forced to abandon what she bravely sought,  
 Deserves at least applause for her attempt,  
 And pity for her loss. But that's a cause  
 Not often unsuccessful: power usurped  
 Is weakness when opposed; conscious of wrong,  
 'Tis pusillanimous and prone to flight.  
 But slaves, that once conceive the glowing thought  
 Of freedom, in that hope itself possess  
 All that the contest calls for; spirit, strength,  
 The scorn of danger, and united hearts;  
 The surest presage of the good they seek.\*

Then shame to manhood, and opprobrious more  
 To France than all her losses and defeats,  
 Old or of later date, by sea or land,

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\* The Author hopes that he shall not be censured for unnecessary warmth upon so interesting a subject. He is aware, that it is become almost fashionable to stigmatize such sentiments as no better than empty declamation; but it is an ill symptom, and peculiar to modern times.

Her house of bondage, worse than that of old  
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastile.  
Ye horrid towers, th' abode of broken hearts ;  
Ye dungeons and ye cages of despair,  
That monarchs have supplied from age to age  
With music, such as suits their sovereign ears,  
The sighs and groans of miserable men !  
There's not an English heart that would not leap  
To hear that ye were fallen at last ; to know  
That e'en our enemies, so oft employed  
In forging chains for us, themselves were free.  
For he, who values Liberty, confines  
His zeal for her predominance within  
No narrow bounds ; her cause engages him  
Wherever pleaded. 'Tis the cause of man.  
There dwell the most forlorn of humankind,  
Immured though unaccused, condemned untried,  
Cruelly spared, and hopeless of escape.  
There, like the visionary emblem seen  
By him of Babylon ; life stands a stump,  
And, filleted about with hoops of brass,  
Still lives, though all his pleasant boughs are gone.  
To count the hour-bell and expect no change ;  
And ever, as the sullen sound is heard,  
Still to reflect, that, though a joyless note  
To him, whose moments all have one dull pace,  
Ten thousand rovers in the world at large  
Account it music ; that it summons some  
To theatre, or jocund feast, or ball ;  
The wearied hireling finds it a release  
From labour ; and the lover who has chid  
Its long delay, feels every welcome stroke  
Upon his heart-strings, trembling with delight—  
To fly for refuge from distracting thought

To such amusements as ingenious woe  
Contrives, hard-shifting, and without her tools—  
To read engraven on the mouldy walls,  
In stagg'ring types, his predecessor's tale,  
A sad memorial, and subjoin his own—  
To turn purveyor to an o'ergorged  
And bloated spider, till the pampered pest  
Is made familiar, watches his approach,  
Comes at his call, and serves him for a friend—  
To wear out time in numb'ring to and fro  
The studs, that thick emboss his iron door;  
Then downward and then upward, then aslant  
And then alternate; with a sickly hope  
By dint of change to give his tasteless task  
Some relish; till the sum, exactly found  
In all directions, he begins again—  
Oh comfortless existence! hemmed around  
With woes, which who that suffers would not kneel  
And beg for exile, or the pangs of death?  
That man should thus encroach on fellow man,  
Abridge him of his just and native rights,  
Eradicate him, tear him from his hold  
Upon the endearments of domestic life  
And social, nip his fruitfulness and use,  
And doom him for perhaps a heedless word  
To bareness, and solitude, and tears,  
Moves indignation, makes the name of king  
(Of king whom such prerogative can please)  
As dreadful as the Manichean god  
Adored through fear, strong only to destroy.  
'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower  
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;  
And we are weeds without it. All constraint,  
Except what wisdom lays on evil men.

Is evil : hurts the faculties, impedes  
Their progress in the road of science ; blinds  
The eyesight of Discovery ; and begets,  
In those that suffer it, a sordid mind,  
Bestial, a meagre intellect, unfit  
To be the tenant of man's noble form.  
Thee therefore still, blameworthy as thou art,  
With all thy loss of empire, and though squeezed  
By public exigence, till annual food  
Fails for the craving hunger of the state,  
Thee I account still happy, and the chief  
Among the nations, seeing thou art free ;  
My native nook of earth ! Thy clime is rude,  
Replete with vapours, and disposes much  
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine :  
Thine unadulterate manners are less soft  
And plausible than social life requires,  
And thou hast need of discipline and art,  
To give thee what politer France receives  
From nature's bounty—that humane address  
And sweetness, without which no pleasure is  
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,  
Or flushed with fierce dispute, a senseless brawl.  
Yet being free I love thee : for the sake  
Of that one feature can be well content,  
Disgraced as thou hast been, poor as thou art,  
To seek no sublunary rest beside.  
But, once enslaved, farewell ! I could endure  
Chains no where patiently ; and chains at home,  
Where I am free by birthright, not at all.  
Then what were left of roughness in the grain  
Of British natures, wanting its excuse  
That it belongs to freemen, would disgust  
And shock me. I should then with double pain

Feel all the rigour of thy fickle clime ;  
And, if I must bewail the blessing lost,  
For which our Hampdens and our Sidneys bled,  
I would at least bewail it under skies  
Milder, among a people less austere ;  
In scenes, which, having never known me free,  
Would not reproach me with the loss I felt.  
Do I forebode impossible events,  
And tremble at vain dreams ? Heaven grant I may !  
But th' age of virtuous politics is past,  
And we are deep in that of cold pretence.  
Patriots are grown too shrewd to be sincere,  
And we too wise to trust them. He that takes  
Deep in his soft credulity the stamp  
Designed by loud declaimers on the part  
Of liberty, themselves the slaves of lust,  
Incurs derision for his easy faith  
And lack of knowledge, and with cause enough :  
For when was public virtue to be found,  
Where private was not ? Can he love the whole,  
Who loves no part ? He be a nation's friend,  
Who is in truth the friend of no man there ?  
Can he be strenuous in his country's cause,  
Who slights the charities, for whose dear sake  
That country, if at all, must be beloved ?

'Tis therefore sober and good men are sad  
For England's glory, seeing it wax pale  
And sickly, while her champions wear their hearts  
So loose to private duty, that no brain,  
Healthful and undisturbed by factious fumes,  
Can dream them trusty to the general weal.  
Such were they not of old, whose tempered blades  
Dispersed the shackles of usurped control,  
And hewed them link from link : then Albion's sons

Were sons indeed ; they felt a filial heart  
Beat high within them at a mother's wrongs ;  
And, shining each in his domestic sphere,  
Shone brighter still, once called to public view.  
'Tis therefore many, whose sequestered lot  
Forbids their interference, looking on,  
Anticipate perforce some dire event ;  
And, seeing the old castle of the state,  
That promised once more firmness, so assailed,  
That all its tempest-beaten turrets shake,  
Stand motionless expectants of its fall.  
All has its date below ; the fatal hour  
Was registered in Heaven ere time began.  
We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works  
Die too : the deep foundations that we lay,  
Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.  
We build with what we deem eternal rock :  
A distant age asks where the fabric stood ;  
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,  
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.

But there is yet a liberty, unsung  
By poets, and by senators unpraised,  
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the powers  
Of earth and hell confed'rate, take away :  
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,  
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind ;  
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more.  
'Tis liberty of heart derived from heaven,  
Bought with His blood, who gave it to mankind,  
And sealed with the same token. It is held  
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure  
By the unimpeachable and awful oath  
And promise of a God. His other gifts  
All bear the royal stamp, that speaks them his,

And are august; but this transcends them all.  
His other works, the visible display  
Of all-creating energy and-might,  
Are grand no doubt, and worthy of the word,  
That, finding an interminable space  
Unoccupied, has filled the void so well,  
And made so sparkling what was dark before.  
But these are not his glory. Man, 'tis true,  
Smit with the beauty of so fair a scene,  
Might well suppose th' Artificer divine  
Meant it eternal, had he not himself  
Pronounced it transient, glorious as it is,  
And, still designing a more glorious far,  
Doomed it as insufficient for his praise.  
These therefore are occasional, and pass;  
Formed for the confutation of the fool,  
Whose lying heart disputes against a God;  
That office served, they must be swept away.  
Not so the labours of his love: they shine  
In other heavens than these that we behold,  
And fade not. There is Paradise that fears  
No forfeiture, and of its fruits he sends  
Large prelibation oft to saints below.  
Of these the first in order, and the pledge,  
And confident assurance of the rest,  
Is Liberty; a flight into his arms,  
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way,  
A clear escape from tyrannizing lust,  
And full immunity from penal woe.  
Chains are the portion of revolted man,  
Stripes, and a dungeon; and his body serves  
The triple purpose. In that sickly, foul,  
Opprobrious residence he finds them all.  
Propense his heart to idols, he is held

In silly dotage on created things,  
Careless of their Creator. And that low  
And sordid gravitation of his powers  
To a vile clod so draws him, with such force  
Resistless from the centre he should seek,  
That he at last forgets it. All his hopes  
Tend downward; his ambition is to sink,  
To reach a depth profounder still, and still  
Profounder, in the fathomless abyss  
Of folly, plunging in pursuit of death.  
But ere he gain the comfortless repose  
He seeks, and acquiescence of his soul  
In Heaven-renouncing exile, he endures—  
What does he not, from lusts opposed in vain,  
And self-reproaching conscience? He foresees  
The fatal issue to his health, fame, peace,  
Fortune, and dignity; the loss of all  
That can ennoble man, and make frail life,  
Short, as it is, supportable. Still worse,  
Far worse than all the plagues, with which his sins  
Infect his happiest moments, he forebodes  
Ages of hopeless misery. Future death,  
And death still future. Not a hasty stroke,  
Like that which sends him to the dusty grave;  
But unrepealable, enduring death.  
Scripture is still a trumpet to his fears:  
What none can prove a forgery may be true;  
What none but bad men wish exploded, must  
That scruple checks him. Riot is not loud  
Nor drunk enough, to drown it. In the midst  
Of laughter his compunctions are sincere,  
And he abhors the jest by which he shines.  
Remorse begets reform. His master-lust  
Falls first before his resolute rebuke,



And seems dethroned and vanquished. Peace ensues,  
But spurious and short-lived; the puny child  
Of self-congratulating Pride, begot  
On fancied Innocence. Again he falls,  
And fights again; but finds his best essay  
A presage ominous, portending still  
Its own dishonour by a worse relapse.  
Till Nature, unavailing Nature, foiled  
So oft, and wearied in the vain attempt,  
Scoffs at her own performance. Reason now  
Takes part with appetite, and pleads the cause  
Perversely, which of late she so condemned;  
With shallow shifts and old devices, worn  
And tattered in the service of debauch,  
Covering his shame from his offended sight.

“ Hath God indeed given appetites to man,  
And stored the earth so plenteously with means  
To gratify the hunger of his wish;  
And doth he reprobate, and will he damn  
The use of his own bounty? making first  
So frail a kind, and then enacting laws  
So strict, that less than perfect must despair?  
Falsehood! which whoso but suspects of truth  
Dishonours God, and makes a slave of man.  
Do they themselves, who undertake for hire  
The teacher's office, and dispense at large  
Their weekly dole of edifying strains,  
Attend to their own music? have they faith  
In what with such solemnity of tone  
And gesture they propound to our belief?  
Nay—conduct hath the loudest tongue. The voice  
Is but an instrument, on which the priest  
May play what tune he pleases. In the deed,

The unequivocal, authentic deed,

We find sound argument, we read the heart."

Such reasonings (if that name must needs belong

T' excuses in which reason has no part)

Serve to compose a spirit well inclined

To live on terms of amity with vice,

And sin without disturbance. Often urged,

(As often as libidinous discourse

Exhausted, he resorts to solemn themes

Of theological and grave import)

They gain at last his unreserved assent ;

Till, hardened his heart's temper in the forge

Of lust, and on the anvil of despair,

He slights the strokes of conscience. Nothing moves,

Or nothing much, his constancy in ill ;

Vain tampering has but fostered his disease ;

'Tis desp'rate, and he sleeps the sleep of death.

Haste now, philosopher, and set him free.

Charm the deaf serpent wisely. Make him hear

Of recitude and fitness, moral truth

How lovely, and the moral sense how sure,

Consulted and obeyed, to guide his steps

Directly to the **FIRST AND ONLY FAIR.**

Spare not in such a cause. Spend all the powers

Of rant and rhapsody in virtue's praise ;

Be most sublimely good, verbosely grand,

And with poetic trappings grace thy prose,

Till it outmantle all the pride of verse.—

Ah, tinkling cymbal, and high-sounding brass,

Smitten in vain ! such music cannot charm

The eclipse, that intercepts truth's heavenly beam,

And chills and darkens a wide-wandering soul.

The **STILL SMALL VOICE** is wanted. He must speak,

Whose word leaps forth at once to its effect :

Who calls for things that are not, and they come.

Grace makes the slave a freeman. 'Tis a change  
That turns to ridicule the turgid speech  
And stately tone of moralists, who boast,  
As if, like him of fabulous renown,  
They had indeed ability to smooth  
The shag of savage nature, and were each  
An Orpheus, and omnipotent in song :  
But transformation of apostate man  
From fool to wise, from earthly to divine,  
Is work for Him that made him. He alone,  
And he by means in philosophic eyes  
Trivial and worthy of disdain, achieves  
The wonder ; humanizing what is brute  
In the lost kind, extracting from the lips  
Of asps their venom, o'erpowering strength  
By weakness, and hostility by love.

Patriots have toiled, and in their country's cause  
Bled nobly ; and their deeds, as they deserve,  
Receive proud recompense. We give in charge  
Their names to the sweet lyre. Th' historic muse,  
Proud of the treasure, marches with it down  
To latest times ; and Sculpture, in her turn,  
Gives bond in stone and ever-during brass  
To guard them, and t' immortalize her trust :  
But fairer wreaths are due, though never paid,  
To those, who, posted at the shrine of Truth,  
Have fallen in her defence ! A patriot's blood,  
Well spent in such a strife, may earn indeed,  
And for a time ensure, to his loved land  
The sweets of liberty and equal laws ;  
But martyrs struggle for a brighter prize,  
And win it with more pain. Their blood is shed

In confirmation of the noblest claim,  
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,  
To walk with God, to be divinely free,  
To soar, and to anticipate the skies.  
Yet few remember them. They lived unknown,  
Till persecution dragged them into fame,  
And chased them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew  
—No marble tells us whither. With their names  
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song:  
And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
Is cold on this. She execrates indeed  
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,  
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.\*

He is the freeman, whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain  
That hellish foes, confed'rate for his harm,  
Can wind around him, but he casts it off,  
With as much ease as Samson his green withes.  
He looks abroad into the varied field  
Of nature, and though poor perhaps, compared  
With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,  
Calls the delightful scen'ry all his own.  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
And the resplendent rivers. His t' enjoy  
With a propriety that none can feel,  
But who, with filial confidence inspired,  
Can lift to Heaven an unpresumptuous eye,  
And smiling say—"My father made them all!"  
Are they not his by a peculiar right,  
And by an emphasis of int'rest his,  
Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,  
Whose heart with praise, and whose exalted mind

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\* See Hume.

With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love,  
That planned, and built, and still upholds, a world  
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man?

Yes—ye may fill your garners, ye that reap  
The loaded soil, and ye may waste much good  
In senseless riot; but ye will not find  
In feast, or in the chase, in song or dance,  
A liberty like his, who, unimpeached  
Of usurpation, and to no man's wrong  
Appropriates nature as his Father's work,  
And has a richer use of yours than you.  
He is indeed a freeman. Free by birth  
Of no mean city; planned or ere the hills  
Were built, the fountains opened, or the sea  
With all his roaring multitude of waves.  
His freedom is the same in every state;  
And no condition of this changeful life,  
So manifold in cares, whose every day  
Brings its own evil with it, makes it less:  
For he has wings, that neither sickness, pain,  
Nor penury, can cripple or confine.  
No nook so narrow but he spreads them there  
With ease, and is at large. Th' oppressor holds  
His body bound, but knows not what a range  
His spirit takes unconscious of a chain;  
And that to bind him is a vain attempt,  
Whom God delights in, and in whom he dwells.

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste  
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,  
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before:  
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart  
Made pure shall relish, with divine delight  
'Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.  
Brutes graze the mountain-top, with faces prone,

And eyes intent upon the scanty herb  
It yields them ; or, recumbent on its brow,  
Ruminatc heedless of the scene outspread  
Beneath, beyond, and stretching far away  
From inland regions to the distant main.  
Man views it, and admires ; but rests content  
With what he views. The landscape has his praise,  
But not its Author. Unconcerned who formed  
The Paradise he sees, he finds it such,  
And, such well-pleas'd to find it, asks no more.  
Not so the mind, that has been touch'd from Heaven,  
And in the school of sacred wisdom taught  
To read his wonders, in whose thought the World,  
Fair as it is, exist'd ere it was.  
Not for its own sake merely, but for his  
Much more, who fashion'd it, he gives it praise ;  
Praise that from Earth resulting, as it ought,  
To Earth's acknowledged Sovereign, finds at once  
Its only just proprietor in Him.  
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed  
New faculties, or learns at least t' employ  
More worthily the powers she own'd before,  
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze  
Of ignorance, till then she overlook'd,  
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms  
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute ;  
The unambiguous footsteps of the God,  
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,  
And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.  
Much conversant with Heaven, she often holds  
With those fair ministers of light to man,  
That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,  
Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they  
With which Heaven rang, when every star, in haste

To gratulate the new-created Earth,  
Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God  
Shouted for joy.—“ Tell me, ye shining hosts,  
That navigate a sea that knows no storms,  
Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,  
If from your elevation, whence ye view  
Distinctly scenes invisible to man,  
And systems, of whose birth no tidings yet  
Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race  
Favoured as ours; transgressors from the womb,  
And hasting to a grave, yet doomed to rise,  
And to possess a brighter heaven than yours?  
As one, who, long detained on foreign shores,  
Pants to return, and when he sees afar  
His country's weather-bleached and battered rocks,  
From the green wave emerging, darts an eye  
Radiant with joy towards the happy land;  
So I with animated hopes behold,  
And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,  
That show like beacons in the blue abyss,  
Ordained to guide th' embodied spirit home  
From toilsome life to never-ending rest.  
Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires,  
That give assurance of their own success,  
And that, infused from Heaven, must thither tend.”

So reads he nature, whom the lamp of truth  
Illuminates. Thy lamp, mysterious Word!  
Which whoso sees no longer wanders lost,  
With intellects bemazed in endless doubt,  
But runs the road of wisdom. Thou hast built  
With means, that were not till by thee employed,  
Worlds, that had never been hadst thou in strength  
Been less, or less benevolent than strong.  
They are thy witnesses, who speak thy power

And goodness infinite, but speak in ears  
That hear not, or receive not their report.  
In vain thy creatures testify of thee,  
Till thou proclaim thyself. Theirs is indeed  
A teaching voice ; but 'tis the praise of thine,  
That whom it teaches it makes prompt to learn,  
And with the boon gives talents for its use.  
Till thou art heard, imaginations vain  
Possess the heart, and fables false as Hell ;  
Yet, deemed oracular, lure down to death  
The uninformed and heedless souls of men.  
We give to chance, blind chance, ourselves as blind,  
The glory of thy work ; which yet appears  
Perfect and unimpeachable of blame,  
Challenging human scrutiny, and proved  
Then skilful most when most severely judged.  
But chance is not ; or is not where thou reign'st :  
Thy providence forbids that fickle power  
(If power she be, that works but to confound)  
To mix her wild vagaries with thy laws.  
Yet thus we dote, refusing while we can  
Instruction, and inventing to ourselves  
Gods such as guilt makes welcome ; gods that sleep,  
Or disregard our follies, or that sit  
Amused spectators of this bustling stage.  
Thee we reject, unable to abide  
Thy purity, till pure as thou art pure,  
Made such by thee, we love thee for that cause,  
For which we shunned and hated thee before.  
Then we are free. Then liberty, like day,  
Breaks on the soul, and by a flash from Heaven,  
Fires all the faculties with glorious joy.  
A voice is heard, that mortal ears hear not,  
Till thou hast touched them ; 'tis the voice of song,



A loud Hosanna sent from all thy works ;  
Which he that hears it with a shout repeats,  
And adds his rapture to the general praise.  
In that blest moment, Nature, throwing wide  
Her veil opaque, discloses with a smile  
The author of her beauties, who, retired  
Behind his own creation, works unseen  
By the impure, and hears his power denied.  
Thou art the source and centre of all minds,  
Their only point of rest, eternal Word !  
From thee departing they are lost, and rove  
At random without honour, hope, or peace.  
From thee is all, that soothes the life of man,  
His high endeavour, and his glad success,  
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.  
But O thou bounteous Giver of all good,  
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !  
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor ;  
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.

# THE TASK.

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## BOOK VI.

### THE WINTER WALK AT NOON.

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#### *Argument of the Sixth Book.*

Bells at a distance.—Their effect.—A fine noon in winter.—A sheltered walk.—Meditation better than books.—Our familiarity with the course of nature makes it appear less wonderful than it is.—The transformation that spring effects in a shrubbery described.—A mistake concerning the course of nature corrected.—God maintains it by an unremitted act.—The amusements fashionable at this hour of the day reprov'd.—Animals happy, a delightful sight.—Origin of cruelty to animals.—That it is a great crime proved from Scripture.—That proof illustrated by a tale.—A line drawn between the lawful and unlawful destruction of them.—Their good and useful properties insisted on.—Apology for the encomiums bestowed by the author on animals.—Instances of man's extravagant praise of man.—The groans of the creation shall have an end.—A view taken of the restoration of all things.—An invocation and an invitation of Him, who shall bring it to pass.—The retired man vindicated from the charge of uselessness.—Conclusion.

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THERE is in souls a sympathy with sounds,  
And as the mind is pitched the ear is pleas'd  
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave;  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.  
How soft the music of those village bells,  
Falling at intervals upon the ear  
In cadence sweet, now dying all away,  
Now pealing loud again, and louder still,  
Clear and sonorous, as the gale comes on!

With easy force it opens all the cells  
Where Memory slept. Wherever I have heard  
A kindred melody, the scene recurs,  
And with it all its pleasures and its pains.  
Such comprehensive views the spirit takes,  
That in a few short moments I retrace  
(As in a map the voyager his course)  
The windings of my way through many years.  
Short as in retrospect the journey seems,  
It seemed not always short; the rugged path,  
And prospect oft so dreary and forlorn,  
Moved many a sigh at its disheart'ning length.  
Yet feeling present evils, while the past  
Faintly impress the mind, or not at all,  
How readily we wish time spent revoked,  
That we might try the ground again, where once  
(Through inexperience, as we now perceive)  
We missed that happiness we might have found!  
Some friend is gone, perhaps his son's best friend,  
A father, whose authority, in show  
When most severe, and must'ring all its force,  
Was but the graver countenance of love;  
Whose favour, like the clouds of spring, might lower,  
And utter now and then an awful voice,  
But had a blessing in its darkest frown,  
Threatening at once and nourishing the plant.  
We loved, but not enough, the gentle hand  
That reared us. At a thoughtless age, allured  
By every gilded folly, we renounced  
His sheltering side, and wilfully forewent  
That converse, which we now in vain regret.  
How gladly would the man recall to life  
The boy's neglected sire! a mother too,  
That softer friend, perhaps more gladly still,

Might he demand them at the gates of death.  
Sorrow has since they went, subdued and tamed  
The playful humour; he could now endure,  
(Himself grown sober in the vale of tears)  
And feel a parent's presence no restraint.  
But not to understand a treasure's worth,  
Till time has stolen away the slighted good,  
Is cause of half the poverty we feel,  
And makes the World the wilderness it is.  
The few that pray at all pray oft amiss,  
And, seeking grace t' improve the prize they hold,  
Would urge a wiser suit than asking more.

The night was winter in its roughest mood;  
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon  
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,  
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,  
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,  
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue  
Without a cloud, and white without a speck  
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.  
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;  
And through the trees I view th' embattled tower,  
Whence all the music. I again perceive  
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,  
And settle in soft musings as I tread  
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,  
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.  
The roof, though moveable through all its length  
As the wind sways it, has yet well sufficed,  
And, intercepting in their silent fall  
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.  
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.  
The redbreast warbles still, but is content  
With slender notes, and more than half suppressed;

Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light  
 From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes  
 From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,  
 That tinkle in the withered leaves below.  
 Stillness, accompanied with sounds so oft,  
 Charms more than silence. Meditation here  
 May think down hours to moments. Here the heart  
 May give a useful lesson to the head,  
 And Learning wiser grow without his books.  
 Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,  
 Have oftentimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells  
 In heads replete with thoughts of other men;  
 Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,  
 The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,  
 Till smoothed, and squared, and fitted to its place,  
 Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich.  
 Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;  
 Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.

Books are not seldom talismans and spells,  
 By which the magic art of shrewder wits  
 Holds an unthinking multitude enthralled  
 Some to the fascination of a name  
 Surrender judgment, hoodwinked. Some the style  
 Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds  
 Of error leads them, by a tune entranced.  
 While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear  
 The insupportable fatigue of thought,  
 And swallowing therefore without pause or choice  
 The total grist unsifted, husks and all.  
 But trees and rivulets, whose rapid course  
 Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,  
 And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,  
 And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time

Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn root,  
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,  
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won  
By slow solicitation, seize at once  
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

What prodigies can power divine perform  
More grand than it produces year by year,  
And all in sight of inattentive man?  
Familiar with the effect we slight the cause,  
And in the constancy of nature's course,  
The regular return of genial months,  
And renovation of a faded world,  
See nought to wonder at. Should God again,  
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race  
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,  
How would the world admire! but speaks it less  
An agency divine, to make him know  
His moment when to sink and when to rise,  
Age after age, than to arrest his course?  
All we behold is miracle; but seen  
So duly, all is miracle in vain.

Where now the vital energy, that moved,  
While summer was, the pure and subtle lymph  
Through th' imperceptible meand'ring veins  
Of leaf and flower? It sleeps; and th' icy touch  
Of unprolific winter has impressed  
A cold stagnation on the intestine tide.  
But let the months go round, a few short months,  
And all shall be restored. These naked shoots,  
Barren as lances, among which the wind  
Makes wintry music, sighing as it goes,  
Shall put their graceful foliage on again,  
And more aspiring, and with ampler spread,  
Shall boast new charms, and more than they have lost.

Then each, in its peculiar honours clad,  
Shall publish even to the distant eye  
Its family and tribe. Laburnum, rich  
In streaming gold; syringa, ivory pure;  
The scentless and the scented rose; this red,  
And of an humbler growth, the other\* tall,  
And throwing up into the darkest gloom  
Of neighb'ring cypress, or more sable yew,  
Her silver globes, light as the foamy surf  
That the wind severs from the broken wave;  
The lilac, various in array, now white,  
Now sanguine, and her beauteous head now set  
With purple spikes pyramidal, as if  
Studious of ornament, yet unresolved  
Which hue she most approved, she chose them all;  
Copious of flowers the woodbine, pale and wan,  
But well compensating her sickly looks  
With never-cloying odours, early and late;  
Hypericum all bloom, so thick a swarm  
Of flowers, like flies clothing her slender rods,  
That scarce a leaf appears; mezereon too,  
Though leafless, well attired, and thick beset  
With blushing wreaths, investing every spray;  
Althæa with the purple eye; the broom,  
Yellow and bright, as bullion unalloyed,  
Her blossoms; and luxuriant above all  
The jasmine, throwing wide her elegant sweets,  
The deep dark green of whose unvarnished leaf  
Makes more conspicuous, and illumines more  
The bright profusion of her scattered stars.—  
These have been, and these shall be in their day;  
And all this uniform uncoloured scene

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\* The Guelder-rose.

Shall be dismantled of its fleecy load,  
And flush into variety again.  
From dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man  
In heavenly truth ; evincing, as she makes  
The grand transition, that there lives and works  
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.  
The beauties of the wilderness are his,  
That makes so gay the solitary place,  
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,  
That cultivation glories in, are his.  
He sets the bright procession on its way,  
And marshals all the order of the year ;  
He marks the bounds, which Winter may not pass,  
And blunts his pointed fury ; in its case,  
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germe,  
Uninjured, with inimitable art ;  
And, ere one flowery season fades and dies,  
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

Some say that in the origin of things,  
When all creation started into birth,  
The infant elements received a law,  
From which they swerve not since. That under force  
Of that controlling ordinance they move,  
And need not his immediate hand, who first  
Prescribed their course, to regulate it now.  
Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God  
Th' encumbrance of his own concerns, and spare  
The great Artificer of all that moves  
The stress of a continual act, the pain  
Of unremitted vigilance and care,  
As too laborious and severe a task.  
So man, the moth, is not afraid, it seems,  
To span omnipotence, and measure might



That knows no measure, by the scanty rule  
And standard of his own, that is to-day,  
And is not ere to-morrow's sun go down.  
But how should matter occupy a charge,  
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law  
So vast in its demands, unless impelled  
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,  
And under pressure of some conscious cause?  
The Lord of all, himself through all diffused,  
Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.  
Nature is but a name for an effect,  
Whose cause is God. He feeds the secret fire  
By which the mighty process is maintained,  
Who sleeps not, is not weary; in whose sight  
Slow circling ages are as transient days;  
Whose work is without labour; whose designs  
No flaw deforms, no difficulty thwarts;  
And whose beneficence no charge exhausts.  
Him blind antiquity profaned, not served,  
With self-taught rites, and under various names,  
Female and male, Pomona, Pales, Pan,  
And Flora, and Vertumnus; peopling earth  
With tutelary goddesses and gods,  
That were not; and commending as they would  
To each some province, garden, field, or grove.  
But all are under one. One Spirit—His,  
Who wore the platted thorns with bleeding brows,  
Rules universal nature. Not a flower  
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,  
Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires  
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,  
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,  
The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.

Happy who walks with him ! whom what he finds  
Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,  
Or what he views of beautiful or grand  
In nature, from the broad majestic oak  
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.  
His presence, who made all so fair, perceived,  
Makes all still fairer. As with him no scene  
Is dreary, so with him all seasons please.  
Though winter had been none, had man been true,  
And earth be punished for its tenants' sake,  
Yet not in vengeance ; as this smiling sky,  
So soon succeeding such an angry night,  
And these dissolving snows, and this clear stream  
Recovering fast its liquid music, prove.

Who then, that has a mind well strung and tuned  
To contemplation, and within his reach  
A scene so friendly to his favourite task,  
Would waste attention at the checkered board,  
His host of wooden warriors to and fro  
Marching and countermarching, with an eye  
As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridged  
And furrowed into storms, and with a hand  
Trembling, as if eternity were hung  
In balance on his conduct of a pin ?  
Nor envies he aught more their idle sport,  
Who pant with application misapplied  
To trivial toys, and, pushing ivory balls  
Across a velvet level, feel a joy  
Akin to rapture, when the bauble finds  
Its destined goal, of difficult access.  
Nor deems he wiser him, who gives his noon  
To Miss, the mercer's plague, from shop to shop  
Wandering, and littering with unfolded silks

The polished counter, and approving none,  
Or promising with smiles to call again.  
Nor him, who by his vanity seduced,  
And soothed into a dream that he discerns  
The difference of a Guido from a daub,  
Frequents the crowded auction; stationed there  
As duly as the Langford of the show,  
With glass at eye, and catalogue in hand,  
And tongue accomplished in the fulsome cant,  
And pedantry, that coxcombs learn with ease:  
Oft as the price-deciding hammer falls,  
He notes it in his book, then raps his box,  
Swears 'tis a bargain, rails at his hard fate,  
That he has let it pass—but never bids.

Here unmolested, through whatever sign  
The sun proceeds, I wander. Neither mist,  
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,  
Nor stranger, intermeddling with my joy,  
E'en in the spring and playtime of the year,  
That calls the unwonted villager abroad  
With all her little ones, a sportive train,  
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,  
And pink their hair with daisies, or to pick  
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,  
These shades are all my own. The tim'rous hare,  
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,  
Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarmed  
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends  
His long love-ditty for my near approach.  
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely elm,  
That age or injury has hallowed deep,  
Where, on his bed of wool and matted leaves,  
He has outslept the winter, ventures forth  
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm sun,

The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of play ;  
He sees me, and at once, swift as a bird,  
Ascends the neighbouring beech ; there whisks his brush,  
And perks his ears, and stamps, and cries aloud,  
With all the prettiness of feigned alarm,  
And anger insignificantly fierce.

The heart is hard in nature, and unfit  
For human fellowship, and as being void  
Of sympathy, and therefore dead alike  
To love and friendship both, that is not pleased  
With sight of animals enjoying life,  
Nor feels their happiness augment his own.  
The bounding fawn, that darts across the glade  
When none pursues, through mere delight of heart,  
And spirits buoyant with excess of glee ;  
The horse as wanton, and almost as fleet,  
That skims the spacious meadow at full speed,  
Then stops, and snorts, and, throwing high his heels,  
Starts to the voluntary race again ;  
The very kine, that gambol at high noon,  
The total herd receiving first from one,  
That leads the dance, a summons to be gay,  
Though wild their strange vagaries, and uncouth  
Their efforts, yet resolved with one consent  
To give such act and utterance, as they may  
To ecstasy too big to be suppressed—  
These, and a thousand images of bliss,  
With which kind Nature graces every scene,  
Where cruel man defeats not her design,  
Impart to the benevolent, who wish  
All that are capable of pleasure pleased,  
A far superior happiness to theirs,  
The comfort of a reasonable joy.

Man scarce had risen, obedient to his call

Who formed him from the dust, his future grave,  
When he was crowned as never king was since.  
God set the diadem upon his head,  
And angel choirs attended. Wondering stood  
The new-made monarch, while before him passed,  
All happy, and all perfect in their kind,  
The creatures, summoned from their various haunts,  
To see their sovereign, and confess his sway.  
Vast was his empire, absolute his power,  
Or bounded only by a law, whose force  
'Twas his sublimest privilege to feel  
And own, the law of universal love.  
He ruled with meekness, they obeyed with joy ;  
No cruel purpose lurked within his heart,  
And no distrust of his intent in theirs.  
So Eden was a scene of harmless sport,  
Where kindness on his part, who ruled the whole,  
Begot a tranquil confidence in all,  
And fear as yet was not, nor cause for fear.  
But sin marred all ; and the revolt of man,  
That source of evils not exhausted yet,  
Was punished with revolt of his from him.  
Garden of God, how terrible the change  
Thy groves and lawns then witnessed ! Every heart,  
Each animal, of every name, conceived  
A jealousy, and an instinctive fear,  
And, conscious of some danger, either fled  
Precipitate the loathed abode of man,  
Or growled defiance in such angry sort,  
As taught him too to tremble in his turn.  
Thus harmony and family accord  
Were driven from Paradise ; and in that hour  
The seeds of cruelty, that since have swelled  
To such gigantic and enormous growth,

Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.  
Hence date the persecution and the pain,  
That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,  
Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,  
To gratify the frenzy of his wrath,  
Or his base gluttony, are causes good  
And just in his account, why bird and beast  
Should suffer torture, and the streams be dyed  
With blood of their inhabitants impaled.  
Earth groans beneath the burden of a war  
Waged with defenceless innocence, while he,  
Not satisfied to prey on all around,  
Adds tenfold bitterness to death by pangs  
Needless, and first torments ere he devours.  
Now happiest they, that occupy the scenes  
The most remote from his abhorred resort,  
Whom once, as delegate of God on earth,  
They feared, and as his perfect image loved.  
The wilderness is theirs, with all its caves,  
Its hollow glens, its thickets, and its plains,  
Unvisited by man. There they are free,  
And howl and roar as likes them, uncontrolled ;  
Nor ask his leave to slumber or to play.  
Wo to the tyrant, if he dare intrude  
Within the confines of their wild domain :  
The lion tells him—I am monarch here—  
And, if he spare him, spares him on the terms  
Of royal mercy, and through generous scorn  
To rend a victim trembling at his foot.  
In measure, as by force of instinct drawn,  
Or by necessity constrained, they live  
Dependent upon man ; those in his fields,  
These at his crib, and some beneath his roof.  
They prove too often at how dear a rate

He sells protection.—Witness at his foot  
The spaniel dying for some venial fault  
Under dissection of the knotted scourge ;  
Witness the patient ox, with stripes and yells  
Driven to the slaughter, goaded, as he runs,  
To madness ; while the savage at his heels  
Laughs at the frantic sufferer's fury, spent  
Upon the guiltless passenger o'erthrown.  
He too is witness, noblest of the train  
That wait on man, the flight-performing horse ;  
With unsuspecting readiness he takes  
His murd'rer on his back, and pushed all day  
With bleeding sides and flanks, that heave for life,  
To the far distant goal, arrives and dies.  
So little mercy shows who needs so much !  
Does law, so jealous in the cause of man,  
Denounce no doom on the delinquent ? None.  
He lives, and o'er his brimming beaker boasts  
(As if barbarity were high desert)  
The inglorious feat, and clamourous in praise  
Of the poor brute, seems wisely to suppose  
The honours of his matchless horse his own.  
But many a crime, deemed innocent on earth,  
Is registered in heaven ; and these no doubt  
Have each their record, with a curse annexed.  
Man may dismiss compassion from his heart,  
But God will never. When he charged the Jew  
To assist his foe's down-fallen beast to rise ;  
And when the bush-exploring boy, that seized  
The young, to let the parent bird go free,  
Proved he not plainly, that his meaner works  
Are yet his care, and have an interest all,  
All, in the universal Father's love ?  
On Noah, and in him on all mankind,

The charter was conferred, by which we hold  
The flesh of animals in fee, and claim  
O'er all we feed on power of life and death.  
But read the instrument, and mark it well :  
The oppression of a tyrannous control  
Can find no warrant there. Feed then, and yield  
Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,  
Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute !

The Governor of all, himself to all  
So bountiful, in whose attentive ear  
The unfledged raven and the lion's whelp  
Plead not in vain for pity on the pangs  
Of hunger unassuaged, has interposed,  
Not seldom, his avenging arm, to smite  
The injurious trampler upon nature's law,  
That claims forbearance even for a brute.  
He hates the hardness of a Balaam's heart ;  
And, prophet as he was, he might not strike  
The blameless animal, without rebuke,  
On which he rode. Her opportune offence  
Saved him, or th' unrelenting seer had died.  
He sees that human equity is slack  
To interfere, though in so just a cause ;  
And makes the task his own. Inspiring dumb  
And helpless victims with a sense so keen  
Of injury, with such knowledge of their strength  
And such sagacity to take revenge,  
That oft the beast has seemed to judge the man.  
An ancient, not a legendary tale,  
By one of sound intelligence rehearsed  
(If such who plead for providence may seem  
In modern eyes,) shall make the doctrine clear.

Where England, stretched towards the setting sun,  
Narrow and long, o'erlooks the western wave,



Dwelt young Misagathus; a scorner he  
Of God and goodness, atheist in ostent,  
Vicious in act, in temper savage-fierce.  
He journeyed; and his chance was, as he went,  
To join a traveller, of far different note,  
Evander, famed for piety, for years  
Deserving honour, but for wisdom more.  
Fame had not left the venerable man  
A stranger to the manners of the youth,  
Whose face too was familiar to his view.  
Their way was on the margin of the land,  
O'er the green summit of the rocks, whose base  
Beats back the roaring surge, scarce heard so high.  
The charity that warmed his heart, was moved  
At sight of the man-monster. With a smile  
Gentle, and affable, and full of grace,  
As fearful of offending whom he wished  
Much to persuade, he plied his ear with truths  
Not harshly thundered forth, or rudely pressed,  
But, like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.  
"And dost thou dream," the impenetrable man  
Exclaimed, "that me the lullabies of age,  
And fantasies of dotards such as thou,  
Can cheat, or move a moment's fear in me?  
Mark now the proof I give thee, that the brave  
Need no such aids as superstition lends,  
To steel their hearts against the dread of death."  
He spoke, and to the precipice at hand  
Pushed with a madman's fury. Fancy shrinks  
And the blood thrills and curdles, at the thought  
Of such a gulf as he designed his grave.  
But, though the felon on his back could dare  
The dreadful leap, more rational, his steed  
Declined the death, and wheeling swiftly round,

Or e'er his hoof had pressed the crumbling verge,  
Baffled his rider, saved against his will.—  
The frenzy of the brain may be redressed  
By med'cine well applied, but without grace  
The heart's insanity admits no cure.  
Enraged the more, by what might have reformed  
His horrible intent, again he sought  
Destruction, with a zeal to be destroyed,  
With sounding whip, and rowels died in blood.  
But still in vain. The Providence, that meant  
A longer date to the far nobler beast,  
Spared yet again the ignoble for his sake.  
And now, his prowess proved, and his sincere  
Incurable obduracy evinced,  
His rage grew cool; and pleased perhaps to have  
earned  
So cheaply the renown of that attempt,  
With looks of some complacence he resumed  
His road deriding much the blank amaze  
Of good Evander, still where he was left  
Fixed motionless, and petrified with dread.  
So on they fared. Discourse on other themes  
Ensuing seemed to obliterate the past;  
And tamer far for so much fury shown,  
(As is the course of rash and fiery men)  
The rude companion smiled, as if transformed.  
But twas a transient calm. A storm was near,  
An unsuspected storm. His hour was come.  
The impious challenger of Power divine  
Was now to learn, that Heaven, though slow to wrath,  
Is never with impunity defied.  
His horse, as he had caught his master's mood,  
Snorting, and starting into sudden rage  
Unbidden, and not now to be controlled,

Rushed to the cliff, and, having reached it, stood.  
At once the shock unseated him : he flew  
Sheer o'er the craggy barrier ; and, immersed  
Deep in the flood, found, when he sought it not,  
The death he had deserved, and died alone.  
So God wrought double justice ; made the fool  
The victim of his own tremendous choice,  
And taught a brute the way to safe revenge.

I would not enter on my list of friends  
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,  
Yet wanting sensibility) the man  
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.  
An inadvertent step may crush the snail,  
That crawls at evening in the public path ;  
But he that has humanity, forewarned,  
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.  
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,  
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,  
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes  
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,  
The chamber, or refectory, may die :  
A necessary act incurs no blame.  
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,  
And guiltless of offence, they range the air,  
Or take their pastime in the spacious field ;  
There they are privileged : and he that hunts  
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,  
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,  
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode.  
The sum is this. If man's convenience, health,  
Or safety, interfere, his rights and claims  
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.  
Else they are all—the meanest things that are,  
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,

As God was free to form them at the first,  
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.  
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons  
To love it too. The springtime of our years  
Is soon dishonoured and defiled in most  
By budding ills, that ask a prudent hand  
To check them. But alas! none sooner shoots,  
If unrestrained, into luxuriant growth,  
Than cruelty, most devilish of them all.  
Mercy to him, that shows it, is the rule  
And righteous limitation of its act,  
By which Heaven moves in pardoning guilty man;  
And he that shows none, being ripe in years,  
And conscious of the outrage he commits,  
Shall seek it, and not find it, in his turn.

Distinguished much by reason, and still more  
By our capacity of Grace divine,  
From creatures, that exist but for our sake,  
Which, having served us, perish, we are held  
Accountable; and God some future day  
Will reckon with us roundly for the abuse  
Of what he deems no mean or trivial trust.  
Superior as we are, they yet depend  
Not more on human help than we on theirs.  
Their strength, or speed, or vigilance, were given  
In aid of our defects. In some are found  
Such teachable and apprehensive parts,  
That man's attainments in his own concerns,  
Matched with the expertness of the brutes in theirs,  
Are oftentimes vanquished, and thrown far behind.  
Some show that nice sagacity of smell,  
And read with such discernment, in the port  
And figure of the man, his secret aim,  
That oft we owe our safety to a skill

We could not teach, and must despair to learn.  
But learn we might, if not too proud to stoop  
To quadruped instructors, many a good  
And useful quality, and virtue too,  
Rarely exemplified among ourselves ;  
Attachment never to be weaned, or changed  
By any change of fortune ; proof alike  
Against unkindness, absence, and neglect ;  
Fidelity, that neither bribe nor threat  
Can move or warp ; and gratitude for small  
And trivial favours, lasting as the life,  
And glistening even in the dying eye.

Man praises man. Desert in arts or arms  
Wins public honour ; and ten thousand sit  
Patiently present at a sacred song,  
Commemoration-mad ; content to hear  
(O wonderful effect of music's power !)  
Messiah's eulogy for Handel's sake.  
But less, methinks, than sacrilege might serve—  
(For, was it less ? what heathen would have dared  
To strip Jove's statue of his oaken wreath,  
And hang it up in honour of a man ?)  
Much less might serve, when all that we design  
Is but to gratify an itching ear,  
And give the day to a musician's praise.  
Remember Handel ? Who, that was not born  
Deaf as the dead to harmony, forgets,  
Or can, the more than Homer of his age ?  
Yes—we remember him ; and, while we praise  
A talent so divine, remember too  
That His most holy book, from whom it came,  
Was never meant, was never used before,  
To buckram out the memory of a man.  
But hush !—the muse perhaps is too severe ;

And with a gravity beyond the size  
And measure of the offence, rebukes a deed  
Less impious than absurd, and owing more  
To want of judgment than to wrong design.  
So in the chapel of old Ely House,  
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,  
Had fled from William, and the news was fresh,  
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce,  
And eke did rear right merrily, two staves,  
Sung to the praise and glory of King George!  
—Man praises man; and Garrick's memory next,  
When time hath somewhat mellowed it, and made  
The idol of our worship while he lived  
The god of our idolatry once more,  
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go  
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine  
The theatre too small shall suffocate  
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits  
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return  
Ungratified; for there some noble lord  
Shall stuff his shoulders with king Richard's bunch,  
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak,  
And strut, and storm, and straddle, stamp and stare,  
To show the world how Garrick did not act.  
For Garrick was a worshipper himself;  
He drew the liturgy, and framed the rites  
And solemn ceremonial of the day,  
And called the world to worship on the banks  
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof  
That piety has still in human hearts  
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.  
The mulberry tree was hung with blooming wreaths;  
The mulberry tree stood centre of the dance;  
The mulberry tree was hymned with dulcet airs;

And from his touchwood trunk the mulberry tree  
Supplied such relics as devotion holds  
Still sacred, and preserves with pious care.  
So 'twas a hallowed time ; decorum reigned,  
And mirth without offence. No few returned,  
Doubtless, much edified, and all refreshed.  
—Man praises man. The rabble all alive  
From tippling benches, cellars, stalls, and styes,  
Swarm in the streets. The statesman of the day,  
A pompous and slow-moving pageant, comes.  
Some shout him, and some hang upon his car,  
To gaze in's eyes and bless him. Maidens wave  
Their kerchiefs, and old women weep for joy :  
While others, not so satisfied, unhorse  
The gilded equipage, and, turning loose  
His steeds, usurp a place they well deserve.  
Why ? what has charmed them ? Hath he saved the  
state ?  
No. Doth he purpose its salvation ? No.  
Enchanting novelty, that moon at full,  
That finds out every crevice of the head  
That is not sound and perfect, hath in theirs  
Wrought this disturbance. But the wane is near,  
And his own cattle must suffice him soon.  
Thus idly do we waste the breath of praise,  
And dedicate a tribute, in its use  
And just direction sacred, to a thing  
Doomed to the dust, or lodged already there.  
Encomium in old time was poet's work ;  
But poets, having lavishly long since  
Exhausted all materials of the art,  
The task now falls into the public hand ;  
And I, contented with an humble theme,  
Have poured my stream of panegyric down

The vale of Nature, where it creeps, and winds  
Among her lovely works with a secure  
And unambitious course, reflecting clear,  
If not the virtues, yet the worth, of brutes.  
And I am recompensed, and deem the toils  
Of poetry not lost, if verse of mine  
May stand between an animal and wo,  
And teach one tyrant pity for his drudge.

The groans of Nature in this nether world,  
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end.  
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,  
Whose fire was kindled at the prophets' lamp,  
The time of rest, the promised Sabbath, comes.  
Six thousand years of sorrow have well-nigh  
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course  
Over a sinful world ; and what remains  
Of this tempestuous state of human things  
Is merely as the working of a sea  
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest :  
For He, whose car the winds are, and the clouds  
The dust that waits upon his sultry march,  
When sin hath moved him, and his wrath is hot,  
Shall visit earth in mercy ; shall descend  
Propitious in his chariot paved with love ;  
And what his storms have blasted and defaced  
For man's revolt shall with a smile repair.

Sweet is the harp of prophecy ; too sweet  
Not to be wronged by a mere mortal touch :  
Nor can the wonders it records be sung  
To meaner music, and not suffer loss.  
But when a poet, or when one like me,  
Happy to rove among poetic flowers,  
Though poor in skill to rear them, lights at last  
On some fair theme, some theme divinely fair,



Such is the impulse and the spur he feels,  
To give it praise proportioned to its worth,  
That not to attempt it, arduous as he deems  
The labour, were a task more arduous still.

O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true,  
Scenes of accomplished bliss ! which who can see,  
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel  
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy ?  
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,  
And clothe all climes with beauty ; the reproach  
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field  
Laughs with abundance ; and the land, once lean,  
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,  
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.  
The various season woven into one,  
And that one season an eternal spring,  
The garden fears no blight, and needs no fence,  
For there is none to covet, all are full.  
The lion, and the libbard, and the bear,  
Graze with the fearless flocks ; all bask at noon  
Together, or all gambol in the shade  
Of the same grove, and drink one common stream.  
Antipathies are none. No foe to man  
Lurks in the serpent now ; the mother sees,  
And smiles to see, her infant's playful hand  
Stretched forth to dally with the crested worm,  
To stroke his azure neck, or to receive  
The lambent homage of his arrowy tongue.  
All creatures worship man, and all mankind  
One Lord, one Father. Error has no place :  
That creeping pestilence is driven away ;  
The breath of Heaven has chased it. In the heart  
No passion touches a discordant string,  
But all is harmony and love. Disease

Is not : the pure and uncontaminated blood  
Holds its due course, nor fears the frost of age.  
One song employs all nations ; and all cry,  
“ Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us !”  
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks  
Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops  
From distant mountains catch the flying joy :  
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,  
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.  
Behold the measure of the promise filled ;  
See Salem built, the labour of a God !  
Bright as a sun the sacred city shines ;  
All kingdoms and all princes of the earth  
Flock to that light ; the glory of all lands  
Flows into her ; unbounded is her joy,  
And endless her increase. Thy rams are there,  
Nebaioth, and the flocks of Kedar there :\*  
The looms of Ormus, and the mines of Ind,  
And Saba’s spicy groves, pay tribute there.  
Praise is in all her gates : upon her walls,  
And in her streets, and in her spacious courts  
Is heard salvation. Eastern Java there  
Kneels with the native of the farthest west ;  
And Æthiopia spreads abroad the hand,  
And worships. Her report has travelled forth  
Into all lands. From every clime they come  
To see thy beauty, and to share thy joy,  
O Sion ! an assembly such as earth  
Saw never, such as Heaven stoops down to see.

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\* Nebaioth and Kedar, the sons of Ishmael, and progenitors of the Arabs, in the prophetic scripture here alluded to, may be reasonably considered as representatives of the Gentiles at large.

Thus Heavenward all things tend. For all were  
once

Perfect, and all must be at length restored.  
So God has greatly purposed; who would else  
In his dishonoured works himself endure  
Dishonour, and be wronged without redress.  
Haste then, and wheel away a shattered world,  
Ye slow-revolving seasons! we would see  
(A sight to which our eyes are strangers yet)  
A world that, does not dread and hate his laws,  
And suffer for its crime; would learn how fair  
The creature is that God pronounces good,  
How pleasant in itself what pleases him.  
Here every drop of honey hides a sting;  
Worms wind themselves into our sweetest flowers;  
And e'en the joy, that haply some poor heart  
Derives from Heaven, pure as the fountain is,  
Is sullied in the stream, taking a taint  
From touch of human lips, at best impure.  
O for a world in principle as chaste  
As this is gross and selfish! over which  
Custom and prejudice shall bear no sway,  
That govern all things here, shouldering aside  
The meek and modest Truth, and forcing her  
To seek a refuge from the tongue of Strife  
In nooks obscure, far from the ways of men:  
Where Violence shall never lift the sword,  
Nor Cunning justify the proud man's wrong,  
Leaving the poor no remedy but tears:  
Where he, that fills an office, shall esteem  
The occasion it presents of doing good  
More than the perquisite: where Law shall speak  
Seldom, and never but as Wisdom prompts  
And Equity; not jealous more to guard

A worthless form, than to decide aright :  
Where Fashion shall not sanctify abuse,  
Nor smooth Good-breeding (supplemental grace)  
With lean performance ape the work of Love!

Come then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
Thou who alone art worthy ! It was thine  
By ancient covenant, ere Nature's birth ;  
And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,  
And overpaid its value with thy blood.  
Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and in their hearts  
Thy title is engraven with a pen  
Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.  
Thy saints proclaim thee king ; and thy delay  
Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see  
The dawn of thy last advent, long desired,  
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,  
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.  
The very spirit of the world is tired  
Of its own taunting question, asked so long,  
“ Where is the promise of your Lord's approach ?”  
The infidel has shot his bolts away,  
Till, his exhausted quiver yielded none,  
He gleans the blunted shafts, that have recoiled,  
And aims them at the shield of Truth again.  
The veil is rent, rent too by priestly hands,  
That hides divinity from mortal eyes ;  
And all the mysteries to faith proposed,  
Insulted and traduced, are cast aside,  
As useless, to the moles and to the bats.  
They now are deemed the faithful, and are praised,  
Who, constant only in rejecting thee,  
Deny thy Godhead with a martyr's zeal,  
And quit their office for their error's sake.

Blind, and in love with darkness! yet e'en these  
Worthy, compared with sycophants, who kneel,  
Thy name adoring, and then preach thee man!  
So fares thy church. But how thy church may fare  
The world takes little thought. Who will may preach,  
And what they will. All pastors are alike  
The wandering sheep, resolved to follow none.  
Two Gods divide them all—Pleasure and Gain:  
For these they live, they sacrifice to these  
And in their service wage perpetual war  
With Conscience and with thee. Lust in their hearts,  
And mischief in their hands, they roam the earth,  
To prey upon each other: stubborn, fierce,  
High minded, foaming out their own disgrace,  
Thy prophets speak of such; and, noting down  
The features of the last degenerate times,  
Exhibit every lineament of these.

Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,  
Due to thy last and most effectual work,  
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world!

He is the happy man, whose life e'en now  
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come;  
Who, doomed to an obscure but tranquil state,  
Is pleased with it, and, were he free to choose,  
Would make his fate his choice; whom peace, the fruit  
Of virtue, and whom virtue, fruit of faith,  
Prepare for happiness; bespeak him one  
Content indeed to sojourn while he must  
Below the skies, but having there his home.  
The world o'erlooks him in her busy search  
Of objects more illustrious in her view;  
And, occupied as earnestly as she,

Though more sublimely, he o'erlooks the world.  
She scorns his pleasures, for she knows them not ;  
He seeks not hers, for he has proved them vain.  
He cannot skim the ground like summer birds  
Pursuing gilded flies ; and such he deems  
Her honours, her emoluments, her joys.  
Therefore in contemplation is his bliss,  
Whose power is such, that whom she lifts from earth  
She makes familiar with a heaven unseen,  
And shows him glories yet to be revealed.  
Not slothful he, though seeming unemployed,  
And censured oft as useless. Stillest streams  
Oft water fairest meadows, and the bird,  
That flutters least, is longest on the wing.  
Ask him, indeed, what trophies he has raised,  
Or what achievements of immortal fame  
He purposes, and he shall answer—None  
His warfare is within. There unfatigued  
His fervent spirit labours. There he fights,  
And there obtains fresh triumphs o'er himself,  
And never withering wreathes, compared with which,  
The laurels which a Cæsar reaps are weeds.  
Perhaps the self-approving haughty world,  
That as she sweeps him with her whistling silks  
Scarce deigns to notice him, or, if she see,  
Deems him a cypher in the works of God,  
Receives advantage from his noiseless hours,  
Of which she little dreams. Perhaps she owes  
Her sunshine and her rain, her blooming spring  
And plenteous harvest, to the prayer he makes,  
When, Isaac like, the solitary saint  
Walks forth to meditate at eventide,  
And think on her, who thinks not for herself.

Forgive him then, thou bustler in concerns  
Of little worth, an idler in the best,  
If, author of no mischief and some good,  
He seek his proper happiness by means  
That may advance, but cannot hinder, thine.  
Nor, though he tread the secret path of life,  
Engage no notice, and enjoy much ease,  
Account him an encumbrance on the state,  
Receiving benefits, and rendering none.  
His sphere though humble, if that humble sphere  
Shine with his fair example, and though small  
His influence, if that influence all be spent  
In soothing sorrow, and in quenching strife,  
In aiding helpless indigence, in works,  
From which at least a grateful few derive  
Some taste of comfort in a world of woe ;  
Then let the supercilious great confess  
He serves his country, recompenses well  
The state, beneath the shadow of whose vine  
He sits secure, and in the scale of life  
Holds no ignoble, though a slighted place.  
The man, whose virtues are more felt than seen,  
Must drop indeed the hope of public praise ;  
But he may boast, what few that win it can,  
That, if his country stand not by his skill,  
At least his follies have not wrought her fall.  
Polite Refinement offers him in vain  
Her golden tube, through which a sensual world  
Draws gross impurity, and likes it well,  
The neat conveyance hiding all th' offence.  
Not that he peevishly rejects a mode  
Because the world adopts it. If it bear  
The stamp and clear impression of good sense,  
And be not costly more than of true worth,

He puts it on, and for decorum sake  
Can wear it e'en as gracefully as she.  
She judges of refinement by the eye,  
He by the test of conscience and a heart  
Not soon deceived; aware that what is base  
No polish can make sterling; and that vice,  
Though well perfumed and elegantly dressed,  
Like an unburied carcass tricked with flowers,  
Is but a garnished nuisance, fitter far  
For cleanly riddance, than for fair attire.  
So life glides smoothly and by stealth away,  
More golden than that age of fabled gold  
Renowned in ancient song; not vexed with care  
Or stained with guilt, beneficent, approved  
Of God and man, and peaceful in its end.  
So glide my life away, and so at last,  
My share of duties decently fulfilled,  
May some disease, not tardy to perform  
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,  
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat,  
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.  
It shall not grieve me then, that once, when called  
To dress a Sofa with the flowers of verse,  
I played awhile, obedient to the Fair,  
With that light task; but soon to please her more,  
Whom flowers alone I knew would little please,  
Let fall the unfinished wreath, and roved for fruit;  
Roved far, and gathered much: some harsh, 'tis true,  
Picked from the thorns and briers of reproof,  
But wholesome, well digested; grateful some  
To palates that can taste immortal truth;  
Insidious else, and sure to be despised.  
But all is in His hand, whose praise I seek.  
In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,



If he regard not, though divine the theme.  
'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime  
And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,  
To charm his ear, whose eye is on his heart ;  
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
Whose approbation—prosper even mine.



**TIROCINIUM:**

OR,

**A REVIEW OF SCHOOLS**

TO THE  
REV. WILLIAM CAWTHORNE UNWIN,  
RECTOR OF STOCK, IN ESSEX,  
THE TUTOR OF HIS TWO SONS,  
THE FOLLOWING  
**Poem,**  
RECOMMENDING PRIVATE TUITION,  
IN PREFERENCE TO  
AN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL,  
IS INSCRIBED,  
BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,  
WILLIAM COWPER.

*Olney, Nov. 6. 1784.*

## TIROCINIUM.

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Κεφαλαιον δη παιδειας ὀρθη τροφη. PLATO.

Ἄρχη πολιτειας πασης νεων τροφα. DIOG. LAERT.

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IT is not from his form, in which we trace  
Strength joined with beauty, dignity with grace,  
That man, the master of this globe, derives  
His right of empire over all that lives.  
That form indeed, the associate of a mind  
Vast in its powers, ethereal in its kind,  
That form, the labour of almighty skill,  
Framed for the service of a freeborn will,  
Asserts precedence, and bespeaks control,  
But borrows all its grandeur from the soul.  
Hers is the state, the splendour, and the throne,  
An intellectual kingdom, all her own.  
For her the Memory fills her ample page  
With truths poured down from every distant age;  
For her amasses an unbounded store,  
The wisdom of great nations, now no more;  
Though laden, not encumbered with her spoil;  
Laborious, yet unconscious of her toil;  
When copiously supplied, then most enlarged;  
Still to be fed and not to be surcharged.  
For her the Fancy, roving unconfined,  
The present muse of every pensive mind,  
Works magic wonders, adds a brighter hue  
To Nature's scenes than Nature ever knew.

At her command winds rise, and waters roar,  
Again she lays them slumbering on the shore ;  
With flower and fruit the wilderness supplies,  
Or bids the rocks in ruder pomp arise.  
For her the Judgment, umpire in the strife,  
That Grace and Nature have to wage through life,  
Quick-sighted arbiter of good and ill,  
Appointed sage preceptor to the Will,  
Condemns, approves, and with a faithful voice  
Guides the decision of a doubtful choice.

Why did the fiat of a God give birth  
To yon fair Sun, and his attendant Earth ?  
And, when descending he resigns the skies,  
Why takes the gentler Moon her turn to rise,  
Whom ocean feels through all his countless waves,  
And owns her power on every shore he laves ?  
Why do the seasons still enrich the year,  
Fruitful and young as in their first career ?  
Spring hangs her infant blossoms on the trees,  
Rocked in the cradle of the western breeze ;  
Summer in haste the thriving charge receives  
Beneath the shade of her expanded leaves,  
Till Autumn's fiercer heats and plenteous dews  
Dye them at last in all their glowing hues.—  
'Twere wild profusion all, and bootless waste,  
Power misemployed, munificence misplaced,  
Had not its author dignified the plan,  
And crowned it with the majesty of man.  
Thus formed, thus placed, intelligent, and taught,  
Look where you will, the wonders God has wrought,  
The wildest scorner of his Maker's laws  
Finds in a sober moment time to pause,  
To press the important question on his heart,  
“Why formed at all, and wherefore as thou art?”

If man be what he seems, this hour a slave,  
 The next mere dust and ashes in the grave ;  
 Endued with reason only to descry  
 His crimes and follies with an aching eye ;  
 With passions, just that he may prove, with pain,  
 The force he spends against their fury vain ;  
 And if, soon after having burnt, by turns,  
 With every lust, with which frail Nature burns,  
 His being end, where death dissolves the bond,  
 The tomb take all, and all be blank beyond ;  
 Then he, of all that Nature has brought forth,  
 Stands self-impeached the creature of least worth,  
 And useless while he lives and when he dies,  
 Brings into doubt the wisdom of the skies.

Truths, that the learned pursue with eager thought,  
 Are not important always as dear-bought,  
 Proving at last, though told in pompous strains,  
 A childish waste of philosophic pains,  
 But truths, on which depends our main concern,  
 That 'tis our shame and misery not to learn,  
 Shine by the side of every path we tread  
 With such a lustre, he that runs may read.  
 'Tis true that, if to trifle life away  
 Down to the sunset of their latest day,  
 Then perish on futurity's wide shore  
 Like fleeting exhalations, found no more,  
 Were all that Heaven required of humankind,  
 And all the plan their destiny designed,  
 What none could reverence all might justly blame,  
 And man would breathe but for his Maker's shame.  
 But reason heard, and nature well perused,  
 At once the dreaming mind is disabused.  
 If all we find possessing earth, sea, air,  
 Reflect His attributes, who placed them there,

Fulfil the purpose, and appear designed  
 Proofs of the wisdom of the all-seeing Mind,  
 'Tis plain the creature, whom he chose to invest  
 With kingship and dominion o'er the rest,  
 Received his nobler nature, and was made  
 Fit for the power in which he stands arrayed ;  
 That first, or last, hereafter, if not here,  
 He too might make his Author's wisdom clear,  
 Praise him on Earth, or, obstinately dumb,  
 Suffer his justice in a world to come.

This once believed, 'twere logic misapplied,  
 To prove a consequence by none denied,  
 That we are bound to cast the minds of youth  
 Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,  
 That taught of God, they may indeed be wise,  
 Nor, ignorantly wand'ring, miss the skies.

In early days the conscience has in most  
 A quickness, which in later life is lost ;  
 Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,  
 Or guilty soon relenting into tears.  
 Too careless often, as our years proceed,  
 What friends we sort with, or what books we read,  
 Our parents yet exert a prudent care,  
 To feed our infant minds with proper fare ;  
 And wisely store the nursery by degrees  
 With wholesome learning, yet acquired with ease  
 Neatly secured from being soiled or torn  
 Beneath a pane of thin translucent horn,  
 A book (to please us at a tender age  
 'Tis called a book, though but a single page)  
 Presents the prayer the Saviour deigned to teach,  
 Which children use, and parsons—when they preach.  
 Lispings our syllables, we scramble next  
 Through moral narrative, or sacred text ;



And learn with wonder how this world began,  
Who made, who marred, and who has ransomed man :  
Points, which, unless the Scripture made them plain,  
The wisest heads might agitate in vain.  
O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing  
Back to the season of life's happy spring,  
I pleased remember, and, while memory yet  
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget ;  
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale  
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail ;  
Whose hum'rous vein, strong sense, and simple style,  
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile ;  
Witty, and well employed, and, like thy Lord,  
Speaking in parables his slighted word ;  
I name thee not, lest so despised a name  
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame ;  
Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,  
That mingles all my brown with sober grey,  
Revere the man, whose *pilgrim* marks the road,  
And guides the *progress* of the soul to God.  
'Twere well with most, if books, that could engage  
Their childhood, pleased them at a riper age ;  
The man, approving what had charmed the boy,  
Would die at last in comfort, peace and joy ;  
And not with curses on his heart, who stole  
The gem of truth from his unguarded soul.  
The stamp of artless piety impressed  
By kind tuition on his yielding breast,  
The youth now bearded, and yet pert and raw,  
Regards with scorn, though once received with awe ;  
And, warped into the labyrinth of lies,  
That babblers, called philosophers, devise,  
Blasphemes his creed, as founded on a plan  
Replete with dreams, unworthy of a man.

Touch but his nature in its ailing part,  
 Assert the native evil of his heart,  
 His pride resents the charge, although the proof\*  
 Rise in his forehead, and seem rank enough :  
 Point to the cure, describe a Saviour's cross  
 As God's expedient to retrieve his loss,  
 The young apostate sickens at the view,  
 And hates it with the malice of a Jew.

How weak the barrier of mere Nature proves,  
 Opposed against the pleasures Nature loves !  
 While self-betrayed, and wilfully undone,  
 She longs to yield, no sooner wooed than won.  
 Try now the merits of this blest exchange  
 Of modest truth for wit's eccentric range.  
 Time was, he closed as he began the day  
 With decent duty, not ashamed to pray :  
 The practice was a bond upon his heart,  
 A pledge he gave for a consistent part ;  
 Nor could he dare presumptuously displease  
 A power, confessed so lately on his knees.  
 But now farewell all legendary tales,  
 The shadows fly, philosophy prevails ;  
 Prayer to the winds, and caution to the waves ;  
 Religion makes the free by nature slaves.  
 Priests have invented, and the world admired  
 What knavish priests promulgate as inspired ;  
 Till Reason, now no longer overawed,  
 Resumes her powers, and spurns the clumsy fraud ;  
 And common-sense diffusing real day,  
 The meteor of the Gospel dies away.  
 Such rhapsodies our shrewd discerning youth  
 Learn from expert inquirers after truth ;

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\* See 2 Chron. ch. xxvi. ver. 19.

Whose only care, might truth presume to speak,  
 Is not to find what they profess to seek.  
 And thus, well-tutored only while we share  
 A mother's lectures and a nurse's care ;  
 And taught at schools much mythologic stuff,\*  
 But sound religion sparingly enough ;  
 Our early notices of truth disgraced,  
 Soon loose their credit, and are all effaced.

Would you your son should be a sot or dunce,  
 Lascivious, headstrong, and all these at once ;  
 That in good time the stripling's finished taste  
 For loose expense, and fashionable waste,  
 Should prove your ruin, and his own at last ;  
 Train him in public with a mob of boys,  
 Childish in mischief only and in noise,  
 Else of a mannish growth, and five in ten  
 In infidelity and lewdness men.  
 There shall he learn, ere sixteen winters old,  
 That authors are most useful pawned or sold ;  
 That pedantry is all that schools impart,  
 But taverns teach the knowledge of the heart :  
 There waiter Dick, with Bacchanalian lays,  
 Shall win his heart, and have his drunken praise,  
 His counsellor and bosom friend shall prove,  
 And some street-pacing harlot his first love.  
 Schools, unless discipline were doubly strong,  
 Detain their adolescent charge too long ;

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\* The author begs leave to explain.—Sensible that, without such knowledge, neither the ancient poets nor historians can be tasted, or indeed understood, he does not mean to censure the pains that are taken to instruct a schoolboy in the religion of the Heathen, but merely that neglect of Christian culture which leaves him shamefully ignorant of his own.

The management of tyros of eighteen  
Is difficult; their punishment obscene.  
The stout tall captain, whose superior size  
The minor heroes view with envious eyes,  
Becomes their pattern, upon whom they fix  
Their whole attention, and ape all his tricks.  
His pride, that scorns t' obey or to submit,  
With them is courage; his effront'ry wit.  
His wild excursions, window breaking feats,  
Robbery of gardens, quarrels in the streets,  
His hair-breadth 'scapes, and all his daring schemes,  
Transport them, and are made their fav'rite themes.  
In little bosoms, such achievements strike  
A kindred spark; they burn to do the like.  
Thus, half-accomplished ere he yet begin  
To show the peeping down upon his chin;  
And, as maturity of years comes on,  
Made just the adept that you designed your son;  
To ensure the perseverance of his course,  
And give your monstrous project all its force,  
Send him to college. If he there be tamed,  
Or in one article of vice reclaimed,  
Where no regard of ord'nances is shown,  
Or looked for now, the fault must be his own.  
Some sneaking virtue lurks in him, no doubt,  
Where neither strumpets' charms, nor drinking bout,  
Nor gambling practices, can find it out.  
Such youths of spirit, and that spirit too,  
Ye nurseries of our boys, we owe to you:  
Though from ourselves the mischief more proceeds,  
For public schools 'tis public folly feeds.  
The slaves of custom and established mode,  
With packhorse constancy we keep the road,

Crooked or straight, through quags or thorny dells,  
True to the gingling of our leader's bells.  
To follow foolish precedents, and wink  
With both our eyes, is easier than to think :  
And such an age as ours balks no expense,  
Except of caution, and of common-sense ;  
Else sure notorious fact and proof so plain,  
Would turn our steps into a wiser train.  
I blame not those, who with what care they can  
O'erwatch the numerous and unruly clan ;  
Or, if I blame, 'tis only that they dare  
Promise a work, of which they must despair.  
Have ye, ye sage intendants of the whole,  
An ubiquarian presence and control,  
Elisha's eye, that, when Gehazi strayed,  
Went with him, and saw all the game he played ?  
Yes—ye are conscious ; and on all the shelves  
Your pupils strike upon, have struck yourselves.  
Or if, by nature sober, ye had then,  
Boys as ye were, the gravity of men ;  
Ye knew at least, by constant proofs addressed  
To ears and eyes, the vices of the rest.  
But ye connive at what ye cannot cure,  
And evils not to be endured, endure,  
Lest power exerted, but without success,  
Should make the little ye retain still less.  
Ye once were justly famed for bringing forth  
Undoubted scholarship and genuine worth ;  
And in the firmament of fame still shines  
A glory, bright as that of all the signs,  
Of poets raised by you, and statesman and divines.  
Peace to them all ! those brilliant times are fled,  
And no such lights are kindling in their stead.

Our striplings shine indeed, but with such rays  
As set the midnight riot in a blaze ;  
And seem, if judged by their expressive looks,  
Deeper in none than in their surgeons' books.

Say muse, (for education made the song,  
No muse can hesitate, or linger long)  
What causes move us, knowing, as we must,  
That these *ménageries* all fail their trust,  
To send our sons to scout and scamper there,  
While colts and puppies cost us so much care ?

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise,  
We love the play-place of our early days ;  
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,  
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.  
The wall on which we tried our graving skill,  
The very name we carved subsisting still ;  
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,  
Tho' mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroyed ;  
The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,  
Playing our games, and on the very spot ;  
As happy as we once, to kneel and draw  
The chalky ring, and knuckle down at taw ;  
To pitch the ball into the grounded hat,  
Or drive it devious with a dextrous pat :  
The pleasing spectacle at once excites  
Such recollection of our own delights,  
That, viewing it, we seem almost to obtain  
Our innocent sweet simple years again.  
This fond attachment to the well-known place,  
Whence first we started into life's long race,  
Maintains its hold with such unfeeling sway.  
We feel it e'en in age, and at our latest day.  
Hark ! how the sire of chits, whose future share  
Of classic food begins to be his care,

With his own likeness placed on either knee,  
 Indulges all a father's heart-felt glee :  
 And tells them, as he strokes their silver locks,  
 That they must soon learn Latin, and to box ;  
 Then, turning, he regales his listening wife  
 With all the adventures of his early life ;  
 His skill in coachmanship, or driving chaise,  
 In bilking tavern bills, and spouting plays ;  
 What shifts he used, detected in a scrape,  
 How he was flogged, or had the luck to escape ;  
 What sums he lost at play, and how he sold  
 Watch, seals, and all—till all his pranks are told.  
 Retracing thus his *frolics* ('tis a name  
 That palliates deeds of folly and of shame,)

He gives the local bias all its sway ;  
 Resolves that where he played his sons shall play  
 And destines their bright genius to be shown  
 Just in the scene where he displayed his own.  
 The meek and bashful boy will soon be taught,  
 To be as bold and forward as he ought ;  
 The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,  
 Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough.  
 Ah happy designation, prudent choice,  
 The event is sure ; expect it, and rejoice !  
 Soon see your wish fulfilled in either child,  
 The pert made perter, and the tame made wild.

The great indeed, by titles, riches, birth,  
 Excused the incumbrance of more solid worth,  
 Are best disposed of where with most success  
 They may acquire that confident address,  
 Those habits of profuse and lewd expense,  
 That scorn of all delights but those of sense,  
 Which, though in plain plebeians we condemn,  
 With so much reason all expect from them.

But families of less illustrious fame,  
 Whose chief distinction is their spotless name,  
 Whose heirs, their honours none, their income small,  
 Must shine by true desert, or not at all,  
 What dream they of, that with so little care  
 They risk their hopes, their dearest treasure, there?  
 They dream of little Charles or William graced  
 With wig prolix, down flowing to his waist;  
 They see th' attentive crowds his talents draw,  
 They hear him speak—the oracle of law.  
 The father, who designs his babe a priest,  
 Dreams him episcopally such at least;  
 And, while the playful jockey scours the room  
 Briskly, astride upon the parlour broom,  
 In fancy sees him more superbly ride  
 In coach with purple lined, and mitres on its side.  
 Events improbable and strange as these,  
 Which only a parental eye foresees,  
 A public school shall bring to pass with ease,  
 But how? resides such virtue in that air,  
 As must create an appetite for prayer?  
 And will it breathe into him all the zeal,  
 That candidates for such a prize should feel,  
 To take the lead and be the foremost still  
 In all true worth and literary skill?

“ Ah blind to bright futurity, untaught  
 The knowledge of the world, and dull of thought!  
 Church-ladders are not always mounted best  
 By learned clerks, and Latinists professed.  
 The exalted prize demands an upward look,  
 Not to be found by pouring on a book.  
 Small skill in Latin, and still less in Greek,  
 Is more than adequate to all I seek.  
 Let erudition grace him, or not grace,  
 I give the bauble but the second place;



His wealth, fame, honours, all that I intend,  
 Subsist and centre in one point—a friend.  
 A friend, whate'er he studies or neglects,  
 Shall give him consequence, heal all defects.  
 His intercourse with peers and sons of peers—  
 There dawns the splendour of his future years ;  
 In that bright quarter his propitious skies  
 Shall blush betimes, and there his glory rise.  
*Your Lordship, and Your Grace!* what school can teach  
 A rhetoric equal to those parts of speech !  
 What need of Homer's verse, or Tully's prose,  
 Sweet interjections ! if he learn but those ?  
 Let reverend churls his ignorance rebuke,  
 Who starve upon a dog's-eared Pentateuch,  
 The parson knows enough, who knows a duke."'  
 Egregious purpose ! worthily begun  
 In barbarous prostitution of your son ;  
 Pressed on *his* part by means, that would disgrace  
 A scrivener's clerk, or footman out of place,  
 And ending, if at last its end be gained,  
 In sacrilege, in God's own house profaned.  
 It may succeed ; and, if his sins should call  
 For more than common punishment, it shall ;  
 The wretch shall rise, and be the thing on Earth  
 Least qualified in honour, learning, worth,  
 To occupy a sacred, awful post,  
 In which the best and worthiest tremble most.  
 The *royal letters* are a thing of course,  
 A king, that would, might recommend his horse ;  
 And deans, no doubt, and chapters, with one voice,  
 As bound in duty, would confirm the choice.  
 Behold your bishop ! well he plays his part,  
 Christian in name, and infidel in heart,  
 Ghostly in office, earthly in his plan,  
 A slave at court, elsewhere a lady's man.

Dumb as a senator, and as a priest  
A piece of mere church-furniture at best ;  
To live estranged from God his total scope,  
And his end sure, without one glimpse of hope.  
But fair although and feasible it seem,  
Depend not much upon your golden dream ;  
For Providence, that seems concerned to exempt  
The hallowed bench from absolute contempt,  
In spite of all the wrigglers into place,  
Still keeps a seat or two for worth and grace ;  
And therefore 'tis, that, though the sight be rare,  
We sometimes see a Lowth or Bagot there.  
Besides, school-friendships are not always found,  
Though fair in promise, permanent and sound ;  
The most disint'rested and virtuous minds,  
In early years connected, time unbinds ;  
New situations give a different cast  
Of habit, inclination, temper, taste ;  
And he, that seemed our counterpart at first,  
Soon shows the strong similitude reversed.  
Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,  
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.  
Boys are at best but pretty buds unblown,  
Whose scent and hues are rather guessed than known ;  
Each dreams that each is just what he appears,  
But learns his error in maturer years,  
When disposition, like a sail unfurled,  
Shows all its rents and patches to the world.  
If, therefore, e'en when honest in design,  
A boyish friendship may so soon decline,  
'Twere wiser sure to inspire a little heart  
With just abhorrence of so mean a part,  
Than set your son to work at a vile trade  
For wages so unlikely to be paid.

Our public hives of puerile resort,  
That are of chief and most approved report,  
To such base hopes, in many a sordid soul,  
Owe their repute in part, but not the whole.  
A principle, whose proud pretensions pass  
Unquestioned, though the jewel be but glass—  
That with a world, not often over-nice,  
Ranks as a virtue, and is yet a vice ;  
Or rather a gross compound, justly tried,  
Of envy, hatred, jealousy, and pride—  
Contributes most perhaps to enhance their fame ;  
And emulation is its specious name.  
Boys, once on fire with that contentious zeal,  
Feel all the rage, that female rivals feel ;  
The prize of beauty in a woman's eyes  
Not brighter than in theirs the scholar's prize.  
The spirit of that competition burns  
With all varieties of ill by turns ;  
Each vainly magnifies his own success,  
Resents his fellow's, wishes it were less,  
Exults in his miscarriage, if he fail,  
Deems his reward too great, if he prevail,  
And labours to surpass him day and night,  
Less for improvement than to tickle spite.  
The spur is powerful, and I grant its force ;  
It pricks the genius forward in its course,  
Allows short time for play, and none for sloth ;  
And, felt alike by each, advances both ;  
But judge, where so much evil intervenes,  
The end, though plausible, not worth the means.  
Weigh, for a moment, classical desert  
Against a heart depraved and temper hurt ;  
Hurt too perhaps for life ; for early wrong,  
Done to the nobler part, affects it long ;

And you are staunch indeed in learning's cause,  
 If you can crown a discipline, that draws  
 Such mischiefs after it, with much applause.

Connexion formed for interest, and endeared  
 By selfish views, thus censured and cashiered :  
 And emulation, as engendering hate,  
 Doomed to a no less ignominious fate :  
 The props of such proud seminaries fall,  
 The Jachin and the Boaz of them all.  
 Great schools rejected then, as those that swell  
 Beyond a size that can be managed well,  
 Shall royal institutions miss the bays,  
 And small academies win all the praise ?  
 Force not my drift beyond its just intent,  
 I praise a school as Pope a government ;  
 So take my judgment in his language dressed,  
 "Whate'er is best administered is best."  
 Few boys are born with talents that excel,  
 But all are capable of living well ;  
 Then ask not, Whether limited or large ?  
 But, Watch they strictly, or neglect their charge ?  
 If anxious only, that their boys may *learn*,  
 While *morals* languish, a despised concern,  
 The great and small deserve one common blame,  
 Different in size, but in effect the same.  
 Much zeal in virtue's cause all teachers boast,  
 Though motives of mere lucre sway the most ;  
 Therefore in towns and cities they abound,  
 For there the game they seek is easiest found ;  
 Though there, in spite of all that care can do,  
 Traps to catch youth are most abundant too.  
 If shrewd, and of a well constructed brain,  
 Keen in pursuit, and vigorous to retain,  
 Your son come forth a prodigy of skill ;  
 As, wheresoever taught, so formed, he will ;

The pedagogue, with self-complacent air,  
 Claims more than half the praise as his due share.  
 But if, with all his genius he betray,  
 Not more intelligent than loose and gay,  
 Such vicious habits as disgrace his name,  
 Threaten his health, his fortune, and his fame ;  
 Though want of due restraint alone have bred  
 The symptoms that you see with so much dread ;  
 Unenvied there, he may sustain alone  
 The whole reproach, the fault was all his own.

O 'tis a sight to be with joy perused,  
 By all whom sentiment has not abused ;  
 New-fangled sentiment, the boasted grace  
 Of those who never feel in the right place ;  
 A sight surpassed by none that we can show,  
 Though Vestris on one leg still shine below—  
 A father blest with an ingenious son,  
 Father, and friend, and tutor, all in one.  
 How !—turn again to tales long since forgot,  
 Æsop, and Phædrus, and the rest?—Why not?  
 He will not blush, that has a father's heart,  
 To take in childish plays a childish part ;  
 But bends his sturdy back to any toy  
 That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy ;  
 Then why resign into a stranger's hand  
 A task as much within your own command,  
 That God and nature, and your interest too,  
 Seem with one voice to delegate to you ?  
 Why hire a lodging in a house unknown,  
 For one whose tend'rest thoughts all hover round your  
 own ?

This second weaning, needless as it is,  
 How does it lacerate both your heart and his !  
 The indented stick, that loses day by day .  
 Notch after notch, till all are smoothed away,

Bears witness, long ere his dismissal come,  
With what intense desire he wants his home.  
But though the joys he hopes beneath your roof  
Bid fair enough to answer in the proof,  
Harmless and safe, and natural as they are,  
A disappointment waits him even there :  
Arrived, he feels an unexpected change,  
He blushes, hangs his head, is shy and strange,  
No longer takes, as once, with fearless ease,  
His favourite stand between his father's knees,  
But seeks the corner of some distant seat,  
And eyes the door, and watches a retreat,  
And, least familiar where he should be most,  
Feels all his happiest privileges lost.  
Alas, poor boy!—the natural effect  
Of love by absence chilled into respect.  
Say, what accomplishments at school acquired,  
Brings he, to sweeten fruits so undesired?  
Thou well deserv'st an alienated son,  
Unless thy conscious heart acknowledge—none ;  
None that, in thy domestic snug recess,  
He had not made his own with more address,  
Though some perhaps, that shock thy feeling mind,  
And better never learned, or left behind.  
Add too, that, thus estranged, thou canst obtain  
By no kind arts his confidence again ;  
That here begins with most that long complaint  
Of filial frankness lost, and love grown faint,  
Which, oft neglected, in life's waning years  
A parent pours into regardless ears.

Like caterpillars, dangling under trees  
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,  
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace  
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race ;

While every worm industriously weaves  
And winds his web about the rivelled leaves ;  
So numerous are the follies that annoy  
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy ;  
Imagination noxious and perverse,  
Which admonition can alone disperse.  
The encroaching nuisance asks a faithful hand,  
Patient, affectionate, of high command.  
To check the procreation of a breed  
Sure to exhaust the plant on which they feed.  
'Tis not enough, that Greek or Roman page,  
At stated hours, his freakish thoughts engage ;  
E'en in his pastimes he requires a friend,  
To warn, and teach him safely to unbend ;  
O'er all his pleasures gently to preside,  
Watch his emotions, and control their tide ;  
And levying thus, and with an easy sway,  
A tax of profit from his very play,  
To impress a value, not to be erased,  
On moments squandered else, and running all to waste.  
And seems it nothing in a father's eye,  
That unimproved those many moments fly ?  
And is he well content his son should find  
No nourishment to feed his growing mind  
But conjugated verbs, and nouns declined ?  
For such is all the mental food purveyed  
By public hackneys in the schooling trade ;  
Who feed a pupil's intellect with store  
Of syntax, truly, but with little more ;  
Dismiss their cares, when they dismiss their flock,  
Machines themselves, and governed by a clock.  
Perhaps a father, blest with any brains,  
Would deem it no abuse, or waste of pains,

To improve this diet, at no great expense,  
With savoury truth and wholesome common sense ;  
To lead his son, for prospects of delight,  
To some not steep, though philosophic, height,  
Thence to exhibit to his wondering eyes  
Yon circling worlds, their distance, and their size,  
The moons of Jove, and Saturn's belted ball,  
And the harmonious order of them all ;  
To show him in an insect, or a flower,  
Such microscopic proof of skill and power,  
As, hid from ages past, God now displays,  
To combat atheists with in modern days ;  
To spread the earth before him, and commend,  
With designation of the finger's end,  
Its various parts to his attentive note,  
Thus bringing home to him the most remote ;  
To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,  
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame :  
And, more than all, with commendation due,  
To set some living worthy in his view,  
Whose fair example may at once inspire  
A wish to copy what he must admire.  
Such knowledge gained betimes, and which appears,  
Though solid, not too weighty for his years,  
Sweet in itself, and not forbidding sport  
When health demands it, of athletic sort,  
Would make him—what some lovely boys have been,  
And more than one perhaps that I have seen—  
An evidence and reprehension both  
Of the mere schoolboy's lean and tardy growth.  
Art thou a man professionally tied,  
With all thy faculties elsewhere applied,  
Too busy to intend a meaner care,  
Than how to enrich thyself, and next thine heir ;



Or art thou (as though rich, perhaps thou art)  
But poor in knowledge, having none t' impart:—  
Behold that figure, neat, though plainly clad;  
His sprightly mingled with a shade of sad;  
Not of a nimble tongue, though now and then  
Heard to articulate like other men;  
No jester, and yet lively in discourse,  
His phrase well chosen, clear, and full of force;  
And his address, if not quite French in ease,  
Not English stiff, but frank, and formed to please;  
Low in the world, because he scorns its arts;  
A man of letters, manners, morals, parts;  
Unpatronized, and therefore little known;  
Wise for himself and his few friends alone—  
In him thy well-appointed proxy see,  
Armed for a work too difficult for thee;  
Prepared by taste, by learning, and true worth,  
To form thy son, to strike his genius forth;  
Beneath thy roof, beneath thine eye, to prove  
The force of discipline, when backed by love;  
To double all thy pleasure in thy child,  
His mind informed, his morals undefiled.  
Safe under such a wing the boy shall show  
No spots contracted among grooms below,  
Nor taint his speech with meannesses, designed  
By footman Tom for witty and refined.  
There, in his commerce with the liv'ried herd,  
Lurks the contagion chiefly to be feared;  
For since (so fashion dictates) all, who claim  
A higher than a mere plebeian fame,  
Find it expedient, come what mischief may,  
To entertain a thief or two in pay,  
(And they that can afford th' expense of more,  
Some half a dozen, and some half a score,)

Great cause occurs, to save him from a band  
So sure to spoil him, and so near at hand ;  
A point secured, if once he be supplied  
With some such Mentor always at his side.  
Are such men rare ? perhaps they would abound,  
Were occupation easier to be found,  
Were education, else so sure to fail,  
Conducted on a manageable scale,  
And schools, that have outlived all just esteem,  
Exchanged for the secure domestic scheme.—  
But, having found him, be thou duke or earl,  
Show thou hast sense enough to prize the pearl,  
And, as thou wouldst th' advancement of thine heir  
In all good faculties beneath his care,  
Respect, as is but rational and just,  
A man deemed worthy of so dear a trust.  
Despised by thee, what more can he expect  
From youthful folly than the same neglect ;  
A flat and fatal negative obtains  
That instant upon all his future pains ;  
His lessons tire, his mild rebukes offend,  
And all th' instructions of thy son's best friend  
Are a stream choked, or trickling to no end.  
Doom him not then to solitary meals ;  
But recollect that he has sense, and feels ;  
And that, possessor of a soul refined,  
An upright heart, and cultivated mind,  
His post not mean, his talents not unknown,  
He deems it hard to vegetate alone.  
And, if admitted at thy board he sit,  
Account him no just mark for idle wit ;  
Offend not him, whom modesty restrains  
From repartee, with jokes that he disdains ;  
Much less transfix his feelings with an oath ;  
Nor frown, unless he vanish with the cloth.—'

And, trust me, his utility may reach  
To more than he is hired or bound to teach ;  
Much trash unuttered, and some ills undone,  
Through rev'rence of the censor of thy son.

But, if thy table be indeed unclean,  
Foul with excess, and with discourse obscene,  
And thou a wretch, whom, following her old plan  
The world accounts an honourable man,  
Because forsooth thy courage has been tried,  
And stood the test perhaps, on the wrong side ;  
Though thou hadst never grace enough to prove  
That any thing but vice could win thy love ;—  
Or hast thou a polite, card-playing wife,  
Chained to the routs that she frequents for life ;  
Who, just when industry begins to snore,  
Flies, winged with joy, to some coach-crowded door ;  
And thrice in every winter throngs thine own  
With half the chariots and sedans in town,  
Thyself meanwhile e'en shifting as thou may'st ;  
Not very sober though, nor very chaste ;  
Or is thine house, though less superb thy rank,  
If not a scene of pleasure, a mere blank,  
And thou at best, and in thy soberest mood,  
A trifler vain, and empty of all good ;  
Though mercy for thyself thou canst have none,  
Hear nature plead, show mercy to thy son.  
Saved from his home, where every day brings forth  
Some mischief fatal to his future worth,  
Find him a better in a distant spot,  
Within some pious pastor's humble cot,  
Where vile example (yours I chiefly mean,  
The most seducing, and the oft'nest seen)  
May never more be stamped upon his breast,  
Not yet perhaps incurably impressed.

Where early rest makes early rising sure,  
Disease or comes not, or finds easy cure,  
Prevented much by diet neat and plain ;  
Or, if it enter, soon starved out again :  
Where all th' attention of his faithful host,  
Discreetly limited to two at most,  
May raise such fruits as shall reward his care,  
And not at last evaporate in air :  
Where, stillness aiding study, and his mind  
Serene, and to his duties much inclined,  
Not occupied in day-dreams, as at home,  
Of pleasures past, or follies yet to come,  
His virtuous toil may terminate at last  
In settled habit and decided taste.—  
But whom do I advise? the fashion-led,  
Th' incorrigibly wrong, the deaf, the dead,  
Whom care and cool deliberation suit  
Not better much than spectacles a brute :  
Who, if their sons some slight tuition share,  
Deem it of no great moment whose, or where ;  
Too proud t' adopt the thoughts of one unknown,  
And much too gay t' have any of their own.  
But courage, man! methought the muse replied,  
Mankind are various, and the world is wide :  
The ostrich, silliest of the feathered kind,  
And formed of God without a parent's mind,  
Commits her eggs incautious to the dust,  
Forgetful that the foot may crush the trust ;  
And, while on public nurs'ries they rely,  
Not knowing, and too oft not caring, why,  
Irrational in what they thus prefer,  
No few, that would seem wise, resemble her.  
But all are not alike. Thy warning voice  
May here and there prevent erroneous choice ;

And some, perhaps, who, busy as they are,  
 Yet make their progeny their dearest care  
 (Whose hearts will ache, once told what ills may reach  
 Their offspring, left upon so wild a beach,)  
 Will need no stress of argument t' enforce  
 Th' expedience of a less advent'rous course:  
 The rest will slight thy counsel, or condemn;  
 But *they* have human feelings—turn to *them*.

To you, then, tenants of life's middle state,  
 Securely placed between the small and great,  
 Whose character, yet undebauched, retains  
 Two thirds of all the virtue that remains,  
 Who, wise yourselves, desire your son should learn  
 Your wisdom and your ways—to you I turn.  
 Look round you on a world perversely blind;  
 See what contempt is fallen on humankind;  
 See wealth abused, and dignities misplaced,  
 Great titles, offices, and trusts disgraced,  
 Long lines of ancestry, renowned of old,  
 Their noble qualities all quenched and cold;  
 See Bedlam's closetted and hand-cuffed charge  
 Surpassed in frenzy by the mad at large;  
 See great commanders making war a trade,  
 Great lawyers, lawyers without study made;  
 Churchmen, in whose esteem their best employ  
 Is odious, and their wages all their joy,  
 Who, far enough from furnishing their shelves  
 With Gospel lore turn infidels themselves;  
 See womanhood despised, and manhood shamed  
 With infamy too nauseous to be named,  
 Fops at all corners, ladylike in mien,  
 Civetted fellows, smelt ere they are seen,  
 Else coarse and rude in manners, and their tongue  
 On fire with curses, and with nonsense hung,

Now flushed with drunk'ness, now with whoredom pale,  
Their breath a sample of last night's regale ;  
See volunteers in all the vilest arts,  
Men well endowed, of honourable parts,  
Design'd by Nature wise, but self-made fools ;  
All these, and more like these, were bred at schools.  
And if it chance, as sometimes chance it will,  
That though school-bred, the boy be virtuous still ;  
Such rare exceptions, shining in the dark,  
Prove, rather than impeach, the just remark :  
As here and there a twinkling star descried  
Serves but to show how black is all beside.  
Now look on him, whose very voice in tone  
Just echoes thine, whose features are thine own,  
And stroke his polished cheek of purest red,  
And lay thine hand upon his flaxen head,  
And say, My boy, th' unwelcome hour is come,  
When thou, transplanted from thy genial home,  
Must find a colder soil and bleaker air,  
And trust for safety to a stranger's care ;  
What character, what turn thou wilt assume  
From constant converse with I know not whom ;  
Who there will court thy friendship, with what views,  
And, artless as thou art, whom thou wilt choose ;  
Though much depends on what thy choice shall be,  
Is all chance-medley, and unknown to me.  
Canst thou, the tear just trembling on thy lids,  
And while the dreadful risk foreseen forbids,  
Free too, and under no constraining force,  
Unless the sway of custom warp thy course ;  
Lay such a stake upon the losing side,  
Merely to gratify so blind a guide ?  
Thou canst not ! Nature, pulling at thine heart,  
Condemns th' unfatherly, th' imprudent part.

Thou wouldst not, deaf to Nature's tend'rest plea,  
 Turn him adrift upon a rolling sea,  
 Nor say, *Go thither*, conscious that there lay  
 A brood of asps, or quicksands in his way ;  
 Then, only governed by the self-same rule  
 Of nat'ral pity, send him not to school.  
 No—guard him better. Is he not thine own,  
 Thyself in miniature, thy flesh, thy bone?  
 And hopest thou not ('tis ev'ry father's hope)  
 That, since thy strength must with thy years elope,  
 And thou wilt need some comfort, to assuage  
 Health's last farewell, a staff of thine old age,  
 That then, in recompense of all thy cares,  
 Thy child shall show respect to thy grey hairs,  
 Befriend thee, of all other friends bereft,  
 And give thy life its only cordial left?  
 Aware then how much danger intervenes,  
 To compass that good end, forecast the means.  
 His heart, now passive, yields to thy command ;  
 Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.  
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,  
 Nor heed what guests there enter and abide,  
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base  
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.  
 But, if thou guard its secret chamber sure  
 From vicious inmates, and delights impure,  
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,  
 And keep him warm and filial to the last ;  
 Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say  
 But, being man, and therefore frail he may?)  
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,  
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Oh, barb'rous! wouldst thou with a Gothic hand  
 Pull down the schools—what!—all the schools i' th'  
 land ;

Or throw them up to livery-nags and grooms,  
Or turn them into shops and auction-rooms?  
A captious question, sir, (and yours is one)  
Deserves an answer similar, or none.  
Wouldst thou, possessor of a flock, employ  
(Apprised that he is such) a careless boy,  
And feed him well, and give him handsome pay,  
Merely to sleep, and let them run astray?  
Survey our schools and colleges, and see  
A sight not much unlike my simile.  
From education, as the leading cause,  
The public character its colour draws;  
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,  
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.  
And though I would not advertise them yet,  
Nor write on each—*This building to be let,*  
Unless the world were all prepared t' embrace  
A plan well worthy to supply their place;  
Yet, backward as they are, and long have been,  
To cultivate and keep the *morals* clean,  
(Forgive the crime) I wish them, I confess,  
Or better managed, or encouraged less.



THE  
YEARLY DISTRESS,

OR TITHING TIME AT STOCK, IN ESSEX

Verses addressed to a country clergyman, complaining of the disagreeableness of the day annually appointed for receiving the dues at the parsonage.

COME, ponder well, for 'tis no jest,  
To laugh it would be wrong,  
The troubles of a worthy priest,  
The burden of my song.

This priest he merry is and blithe  
Three quarters of a year,  
But oh! it cuts him like a scythe,  
When tithing time draws near.

He then is full of fright and fears,  
As one at point to die,  
And long before the day appears  
He heaves up many a sigh.

For then the farmers come jog, jog,  
Along the miry road,  
Each heart as heavy as a log,  
To make their payments good.

In sooth, the sorrow of such days  
Is not to be expressed,  
When he that takes and he that pays  
Are both alike distressed.

Now all unwelcome at his gates  
 The clumsy swains alight,  
 With rueful faces and bald pates—  
 He trembles at the sight.

And well he may, for well he knows  
 Each bumpkin of the clan,  
 Instead of paying what he owes,  
 Will cheat him if he can.

So in they come—each makes his leg,  
 And flings his head before,  
 And looks as if he came to beg,  
 And not to quit a score.

“ And how does miss and madam do,  
 The little boy and all ?”  
 “ All tight and well. And how do you,  
 Good Mr. What-d’ye-call ?”

The dinner comes, and down they sit:  
 Were e’er such hungry folk ?  
 There’s little talking, and no wit ;  
 It is no time to joke.

One wipes his nose upon his sleeve,  
 One spits upon the floor,  
 Yet, not to give offence or grieve,  
 Holds up the cloth before.

The punch goes round, and they are dull  
 And lumpish still as ever ;  
 Like barrels with their bellies full,  
 They only weigh the heavier.

At length the busy time begins.

“ Come, neighbours, we must wag—”  
The money chinks, down drop their chins,  
Each lugging out his bag.

One talks of mildew and of frost,  
And one of storms of hail,  
And one of pigs, that he has lost  
By maggots at the tail.

Quoth one, “ A rarer man than you  
In pulpit none shall hear ;  
But yet, methinks, to tell you true,  
You sell it plaguy-dear.”

O why are farmers made so coarse,  
Or clergy made so fine ?  
A kick, that scarce would move a horse,  
May kill a sound divine.

Then let the boobies stay at home ;  
'Twould cost him I dare say,  
Less trouble taking twice the sum,  
Without the clowns that pay.

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## SONNET

ADDRESSED TO HENRY COWPER, ESQ.

On his emphatical and interesting delivery of the defence of  
Warren Hastings, Esq. in the House of Lords.

COWPER, whose silver voice, tasked sometimes hard,  
Legends prolix delivers in the ears.

( Attentive when thóu read'st) of England's peers,  
Let verse at length yield thee thy just reward.

Thou wast not heard with drowsy disregard;  
Expending late on all that length of plea  
Thy generous powers, but silence honoured thee,  
Mute as e'er gazed on orator or bard.

Thou art not voice alone, but hast beside  
Both heart and head; and couldst with music sweet  
Of Attic phrase and senatorial tone,  
Like thy renowned forefathers, far and wide  
Thy fame diffuse, praised not for utterance meet  
Of *others'* speech, but magic of *thy own*.

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## LINES

ADDRESSED TO DR. DARWIN

Author of "The Botanic Garden."

Two Poets,\* (poets by report,  
Not oft so well agree,)  
Sweet Harmonist of Flora's court!  
Conspire to honour Thee.

They best can judge a poet's worth,  
Who oft themselves have known  
The pangs of a poetic birth  
By labours of their own.

---

\* Alluding to the poem by Mr. Hayley, which accompanied these lines.

We therefore pleased, extol thy song,  
Though various yet complete,  
Rich in embellishment as strong,  
And learned as 'tis sweet.

No envy mingles with our praise, 't  
Though, could our hearts repine  
At any poet's happier lays,  
They would—they must at thine.

But we, in mutual bondage knit  
Of friendship's closest tie,  
Can gaze on even Darwin's wit  
With an unjaundiced eye ;

And deem the Bard, whoe'er he be,  
And howsoever known,  
Who would not twine a wreath for Thee,  
Unworthy of his own.

---

ON

MRS. MONTAGU'S FEATHER HANGINGS.

THE birds put off their every hue,  
To dress a room for Montagu.  
The Peacock sends his heavenly dyes,  
His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes* ;  
The Pheasant plumes, which round infold  
His mantling neck with downy gold ;  
The Cock his arched tail's azure show ;  
And, river-blanch'd, the Swan his snow.

All tribes beside of Indian name,  
 That glossy shine, or vivid flame,  
 Where rises, and where sets the day,  
 Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,  
 Contribute to the gorgeous plan,  
 Proud to advance it all they can.  
 This plumage neither dashing shower,  
 Nor blasts that shake the dripping bower,  
 Shall drench again or discompose,  
 But, screened from every storm that blows,  
 It boasts a splendour ever new,  
 Safe with protecting Montagu.

To the same patroness resort,  
 Secure of favour at her court,  
 Strong Genius, from whose forge of thought  
 Forms rise, to quick perfection wrought,  
 Which, though new born, with vigour move,  
 Like Pallas springing armed from Jove—  
 Imagination scattering round  
 Wild roses over furrowed ground,  
 Which Labour of his frown beguile,  
 And teach Philosophy a smile—  
 Wit flashing on Religion's side,  
 Whose fires, to sacred Truth applied,  
 The gem, though luminous before,  
 Obtrude on human notice more,  
 Like sunbeams on the golden height  
 Of some tall temple playing bright—  
 Well-tutored Learning, from his books  
 Dismissed with grave, not haughty looks,  
*Their* order on his shelves exact,  
 Not more harmonious or compact  
 Than that, to which he keeps confined  
 The various treasures of his mind—

All these to Montagu's repair,  
 Ambitious of a shelter there.  
 There Genius, Learning, Fancy, Wit,  
 Their ruffled plumage calm refit,  
 (For stormy troubles loudest roar  
 Around their flight who highest soar)  
 And in her eye, and by her aid,  
 Shine safe without a fear to fade.

She thus maintains divided sway  
 With you bright regent of the day ;  
 The plume and poet both, we know,  
 Their lustre to his influence owe ;  
 And she the works of Phœbus aiding,  
 Both poet saves and plume from fading.



## VERSES

Supposed to be written by ALEXANDER SELKIRK, during his solitary abode in the island of Juan Fernandez.

I AM monarch of all I survey,  
 My right there is none to dispute ;  
 From the centre all round to the sea,  
 I am lord of the fowl and the brute.  
 O Solitude ! where are the charms  
 That sages have seen in thy face ?  
 Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
 Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach,  
 I must finish my journey alone,  
 Never hear the sweet music of speech,  
 I start at the sound of my own.

The beasts, that roam over the plain,  
My form with indifference see ;  
They are so unacquainted with man,  
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship, and love,  
Divinely bestowed upon man,  
O, had I the wings of a dove,  
How soon would I taste you again!  
My sorrows I then might assuage  
In the ways of religion and truth,  
Might learn from the wisdom of age,  
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion ! what treasure untold  
Resides in that heavenly word !  
More precious than silver and gold,  
Or all that this earth can afford.  
But the sound of the church-going bell  
These valleys and rocks never heard,  
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,  
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport,  
Convey to this desolate shore  
Some cordial endearing report  
Of a land I shall visit no more.  
My friends, do they now and then send  
A wish or a thought after me ?  
O tell me I yet have a friend,  
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !  
Compared with the speed of its flight,



The tempest itself lags behind,  
 And the swift-winged arrows of light.  
 When I think of my own native land,  
 In a moment I seem to be there ;  
 But alas ! recollection at hand  
 Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,  
 The beast is laid down in his lair ;  
 Even here is a season of rest,  
 And I to my cabin repair.  
 There's mercy in every place,  
 And mercy, encouraging thought !  
 Gives even affliction a grace,  
 And reconciles man to his lot.



ON THE PROMOTION OF  
 EDWARD THURLOW, Esq.

TO THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLORSHIP OF ENGLAND.

ROUND Thurlow's head in early youth  
 And in his sportive days,  
 Fair Science poured the light of truth,  
 And Genius shed his rays.

See ! with united wonder cried  
 Th' experienced and the sage,  
 Ambition in a boy supplied  
 With all the skill of age !

Discernment, eloquence, and grace  
 Proclaim him born to sway

The balance in the highest place,  
And bear the palm away.

The praise bestowed was just and wise ;  
He sprang impetuous forth  
Secure of conquest, where the prize  
Attends superior worth.

So the best courser on the plain  
Ere yet he starts is known,  
And does but at the goal obtain  
What all had deemed his own.



## ODE TO PEACE.

COME, peace of mind, delightful guest !  
Return, and make thy downy nest  
Once more in this sad heart :  
Nor riches I nor power pursue,  
Nor hold forbidden joys in view ;  
We therefore need not part.

Where wilt thou dwell, if not with me,  
From av'rice and ambition free,  
And pleasure's fatal wiles ?  
For whom, alas ! dost thou prepare  
The sweets, that I was wont to share,  
The banquet of thy smiles ?

The great, the gay, shall they partake  
The heaven that thou alone canst make ?

And wilt thou quit the stream,  
 That murmurs through the dewy mead,  
 The grove and the sequestered shed,  
 To be a guest with them ?

For thee I panted, thee I prized,  
 For thee I gladly sacrificed  
 Whate'er I loved before ;  
 And shall I see thee start away,  
 And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—  
 Farewell ! we meet no more !



## HUMAN FRAILITY.

WEAK and irresolute is man ;  
 The purpose of to-day ;  
 Woven with pains into his plan,  
 To-morrow rends away.

The bow well bent and smart the spring,  
 Vice seems already slain ;  
 But Passion rudely snaps the string,  
 And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent  
 Finds out his weaker part ;  
 Virtue engages his assent,  
 But Pleasure wins his heart.

'Tis here the folly of the wise  
 Through all his heart we view ;  
 And, while his tongue the charge denies,  
 His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length,  
 And dangers little known,  
 A stranger to superior strength,  
 Man vainly trusts his own.

But oars alone can ne'er prevail,  
 To reach the distant coast ;  
 The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,  
 Or all the toil is lost.



## THE MODERN PATRIOT.

REBELLION is my theme all day ;  
 I only wish 'twould come  
 (As who knows but perhaps it may ?)  
 A little nearer home.

Yon roaring boys, who rave and fight  
 On t'other side the Atlantic,  
 I always held them in the right,  
 But most so when most frantic.

When lawless mobs insult the court,  
 That man shall be my toast,  
 If breaking windows be the sport,  
 Who bravely breaks the most.

But O ! for him my fancy culls  
 The choicest flowers she bears,  
 Who constitutionally pulls  
 Your house about your ears.

Such civil broils are my delight,  
 Though some folks can't endure them,  
 Who say the mob are mad outright,  
 And that a rope must cure them.

A rope! I wish we patriots had  
 Such strings for all who need 'em—  
 What! hang a man for going mad!  
 Then farewell British freedom.



ON OBSERVING SOME

## NAMES OF LITTLE NOTE

RECORDED IN THE BIOGRAPHIA BRITANNICA.

OH, fond attempt to give a deathless lot  
 To names ignoble, born to be forgot!  
 In vain, recorded in historic page,  
 They court the notice of a future age:  
 Those twinkling tiny lustres of the land  
 Drop one by one from Fame's neglecting hand;  
 Lethæan gulfs receive them as they fall,  
 And dark oblivion soon absorbs them all.

So when a child, as playful children use,  
 Has burnt to tinder a stale last year's news,  
 The flame extinct, he views the roving fire—  
 There goes my lady, and there goes the squire,  
 There goes the parson, oh illustrious spark!  
 And there, scarce less illustrious, goes the clerk!

## REPORT

OF AN ADJUDGED CASE, NOT TO BE FOUND IN ANY  
OF THE BOOKS.

BETWEEN Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,  
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;  
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,  
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause  
With a great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;  
While chief baron Ear sat to balance the laws,  
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,  
And your lordship, he said, will undoubtedly find,  
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,  
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.

Then holding the spectacles up to the court—  
Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle,  
As wide as the ridge of the nose is; in short,  
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

Again, would your lordship a moment suppose  
(’Tis a case that has happened, and may be again)  
That the visage or countenance had not a nose,  
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,  
With a reasoning the court will never condemn,  
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,  
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.

Then shifting his side, (as a lawyer knows how)  
 He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes;  
 But what were his arguments few people know,  
 For the court did not think they were equally wise.

So his lordship decreed, with a grave solemn tone,  
 Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—  
 That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,  
 By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut!



ON THE BURNING OF  
 LORD MANSFIELD'S LIBRARY,

TOGETHER WITH HIS MSS.

By the Mob, in the Month of June, 1780.

So then—the Vandals of our isle,  
 Sworn foes to sense and law,  
 Have burnt to dust a nobler pile  
 Than ever Roman saw!

And MURRAY sighs o'er Pope and Swift,  
 And many a treasure more,  
 The well-judged purchase, and the gift,  
 That graced his lettered store

*Their* pages mangled, burnt and torn,  
 The loss was *his alone*;  
 But ages yet to come shall mourn  
 The burning of *his own*.

## ON THE SAME.

WHEN wit and genius meet their doom  
 In all devouring flame,  
 They tell us of the fate of Rome,  
 And bid us fear the same.

O'er MURRAY'S loss the Muses wept,  
 They felt the rude alarm,  
 Yet blessed the guardian care that kept  
 His sacred head from harm.

There Mem'ry, like the bee, that's fed  
 From Flora's balmy store,  
 The quintessence of all he read  
 Had treasured up before.

The lawless herd, with fury blind,  
 Have done him cruel wrong;  
 The flowers are gone—but still we find  
 The honey on his tongue.



## ON THE DEATH OF

MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON'S

## BULFINCH.

YE nymphs! if e'er your eyes were red  
 With tears o'er hapless fav'rites shed,  
 O share Maria's grief!  
 Her fav'rite, even in his cage,  
 (What will not hunger's cruel rage?)  
 Assassined by a thief.



Where Rhenus strays his vines among,  
The egg was laid from which he sprung ;  
    And, though by nature mute,  
Or only with a whistle blest,  
Well-taught he all the sounds expressed  
    Of flagelet or flute.

The honours of his ebon poll  
Were brighter than the sleekest mole ;  
    His bosom of the the hue  
With which Aurora decks the skies,  
When piping winds shall soon arise,  
    To sweep away the dew.

Above, below, in all the house,  
Dire foe alike of bird and mouse,  
    No cat had leave to dwell ;  
And Bully's cage supported stood  
On props of smoothest-shaven wood,  
    Large-built, and latticed well.

Well-latticed—but the grate, alas !  
Not rough with wire of steel or brass,  
    For Bully's plumage sake,  
But smooth with wands from Ouse's side,  
With which, when neatly peeled and dried,  
    The swains their baskets make.

Night veiled the pole, all seemed secure :  
When led by instinct sharp and sure,  
    Subsistence to provide,  
A beast forth sallied on the scout,  
Long-backed, long-tailed, with whiskered snout,  
    And badger-coloured hide.

He, entering at the study door,  
Its ample area 'gan explore :  
    And something in the wind  
Conjectured, sniffing round and round,  
Better than all the books he found,  
    Food chiefly for the mind.

Just then, by adverse fate impressed,  
A dream disturbed poor Bully's rest ;  
    In sleep he seemed to view  
A rat fast clinging to the cage,  
And, screaming at the sad presage,  
    Awoke and found it true.

For, aided both by ear and scent,  
Right to his mark the monster went—  
    Ah, muse, forbear to speak  
Minute the horrors that ensued ;  
His teeth were strong, the cage was wood—  
    He left poor Bully's beak.

Oh had he made that too his prey ;  
That beak, whence issued many a lay  
    Of such mellifluous tone,  
Might have repaid him well, I wote,  
For silencing so sweet a throat,  
    Fast stuck within his own.

Maria weeps—the Muses mourn—  
So when, by Bacchanalians torn,  
    On Thracian Hebrus' side  
The tree-enchanted Orpheus fell,  
His head alone remained to tell  
    The cruel death he died.

THE  
LOVE OF THE WORLD REPROVED;

OR, HYPOCRISY DETECTED.\*

THUS says the prophet of the Turk,  
 Good Mussulman, abstain from pork ;  
 There is a part in every swine  
 No friend or follower of mine  
 May taste, whate'er his inclination,  
 On pain of excommunication.  
 Such Mahomet's mysterious charge,  
 And thus he left the point at large.  
 Had he the sinful part expressed,  
 They might with safety eat the rest ;  
 But for one piece they thought it hard  
 From the whole hog to be debarred ;  
 And set their wit at work to find  
 What joint the prophet had in mind.  
 Much controversy straight arose,  
 'These choose the back, the belly those ;  
 By some 'tis confidently said  
 He meant not to forbid the head ;  
 While others at that doctrine rail,  
 And piously prefer the tail.  
 Thus, conscience freed from every clog,  
 Mahometans eat up the hog.

You laugh—'tis well—The tale applied  
 May make you laugh on t' other side.

---

\* It may be proper to inform the reader, that this piece has already appeared in print, having found its way, though with some unnecessary additions by an unknown hand, into the Leeds Journal, without the author's privity.

Renounce the world—the preacher cries.  
 We do—a multitude replies.  
 While one as innocent regards  
 A snug and friendly game at cards ;  
 And one, whatever you may say,  
 Can see no evil in a play ;  
 Some love a concert, or a race ;  
 And others shooting, and the chase.  
 Reviled and loved, renounced and followed,  
 Thus, bit by bit, the world is swallowed ;  
 Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,  
 Yet likes a slice as well as he ;  
 With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,  
 Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.



## THE ROSE.

THE rose had been washed, just washed in a shower  
 Which Mary to Anna conveyed,  
 The plentiful moisture encumbered the flower,  
 And weighed down its beautiful head.

The cup was all filled, and the leaves were all wet,  
 And it seemed to a fanciful view,  
 To weep for the buds it had left with regret,  
 On the flourishing bush where it grew.

I hastily seized it, unfit as it was  
 For a nosegay, so dripping and drowned,  
 And swinging it rudely, too rudely, alas !  
 I snapped it—it fell to the ground.

And such, I exclaimed, is the pitiless part  
Some act by the delicate mind,  
Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart  
Already to sorrow resigned.

This elegant rose, had I shaken it less,  
Might have bloomed with its owner a while;  
And the tear, that is wiped with a little address,  
May be followed perhaps by a smile.

---

## THE DOVES.

REASONING at every step he treads,  
Man yet mistakes his way,  
While meaner things, whom instinct leads,  
Are rarely known to stray.

One silent eve I wandered late,  
And heard the voice of love;  
The turtle thus addressed her mate,  
And soothed the listening dove:

Our mutual bond of faith and truth  
No time shall disengage,  
Those blessings of our early youth  
Shall cheer our latest age:

While innocence without disguise,  
And constancy sincere,  
Shall fill the circles of those eyes,  
And mine can read them there;

Those ills that wait on all below,  
Shall ne'er be felt by me,  
Or gently felt, and only so,  
As being shared with thee.

When lightnings flash among the trees,  
Or kites are hovering near,  
I fear lest thee alone they seize,  
And know no other fear.

'Tis then I feel myself a wife  
And press thy wedded side,  
Resolved a union formed for life  
Death never shall divide.

But oh! if fickle and unchaste,  
(Forgive a transient thought)  
Thou could become unkind at last,  
And scorn thy present lot,

No need of lightnings from on high,  
Or kites with cruel beak ;  
Denied the endearments of thine eye,  
This widowed heart would break.

Thus sang the sweet sequestered bird,  
Soft as the passing wind ;  
And I recorded what I heard,  
A lesson for mankind.

## A FABLE.

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast  
 Her new-laid eggs she fondly pressed,  
 And, on her wickerwork high mounted,  
 Her chickens prematurely counted,  
 (A fault philosophers might blame  
 If quite exempted from the same,)  
 Enjoyed at ease the genial day ;  
 'Twas April, as the bumpkins say,  
 The legislature called it May.  
 But suddenly a wind as high,  
 As ever swept a winter sky,  
 Shook the young leaves about her ears,  
 And filled her with a thousand fears,  
 Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,  
 And spread her golden hopes below.  
 But just at eve the blowing weather  
 And all her fears were hushed together :  
 And now, quoth poor unthinking Ralph,  
 'Tis over, and the brood is safe ;  
 (For ravens, though as birds of omen  
 They teach both conj'urers and old women,  
 To tell us what is to befall,  
 Can't prophesy themselves at all :)  
 The morning came, when neighbour Hodge,  
 Who long had marked her airy lodge,  
 And destined all the treasures there  
 A gift to his expecting fair,  
 Climbed like a squirrel to his dray,  
 And bore the worthless prize away.

## MORAL.

'Tis Providence alone secures;  
 In every change, both mine and yours:  
 Safety consists not in escape  
 From dangers of a frightful shape;  
 An earthquake may be bid to spare  
 The man, that's strangled by a hair.  
 Fate steals along with silent tread,  
 Found oftenest in what least we dread;  
 Frowns in the storm with angry brow,  
 But in the sunshine strikes the blow.



## A COMPARISON.

THE lapse of time and rivers is the same,  
 Both speed their journey with a restless stream;  
 The silent pace, with which they steal away,  
 No wealth can bribe, no prayers persuade to stay;  
 Alike irrevocable both when passed,  
 And a wide ocean swallows both at last.  
 Though each resemble each in every part,  
 A diff'rence strikes at length the musing heart:  
 Streams never flow in vain; where streams abound,  
 How laughs the land with various plenty crowned!  
 But time, that should enrich the nobler mind,  
 Neglected leaves a dreary waste behind.



## ANOTHER.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY.

SWEET stream, that winds through yonder glade,  
 Apt emblem of a virtuous maid—  
 Silent and chaste she steals along,  
 Far from the world's gay busy throng;  
 With gentle, yet prevailing force,  
 Intent upon her destined course;  
 Graceful and useful all she does,  
 Blessing and blest where'er she goes,  
 Pure-hosomed as that watery glass,  
 And heaven reflected in her face.

---

 THE POETS NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

TO MRS. (NOW LADY) THROCKMORTON.

MARIA! I have every good  
 For thee wished many a time,  
 Both sad, and in a cheerful mood,  
 But never yet in rhyme.

To wish thee fairer is no need,  
 More prudent, or more sprightly,  
 Or more ingenious, or more freed  
 From temper-flaws unsightly.

What favour then, not yet possessed,  
 Can I for thee require,  
 In wedded love already blest,  
 To thy whole heart's desire?

None here is happy but in part :  
 Full bliss, is bliss divine ;  
 There dwells some wish in every heart,  
 And doubtless one in thine.

That wish on some fair future day,  
 Which Fate shall brightly gild,  
 ('Tis blameless, be it what it may)  
 I wish it all fulfilled.

---

## ODE TO APOLLO.

ON AN INKGLASS ALMOST DRIED IN THE SUN.

PATRON of all those luckless brains  
 That, to the wrong side leaning,  
 Indite much metre with much pains,  
 And little or no meaning :

Ah why, since oceans, rivers, streams,  
 That water all the nations,  
 Pay tribute to thy glorious beams,  
 In constant exhalations—

Why, stooping from the noon of day,  
 Too covetous of drink,  
 Apollo, hast thou stolen away  
 A poet's drop of ink ?

Upborne into the viewless air,  
 It floats a vapour now,  
 Impelled through regions dense and rare,  
 By all the winds that blow.

Ordained perhaps, ere summer flies,  
 Combined with millions more,  
 To form an Iris in the skies,  
 Though black and foul before.

Illustrious drop! and happy then  
 Beyond the happiest lot,  
 Of all that ever passed my pen  
 So soon to be forgot!

Phœbus, if such be thy design,  
 To place it in thy bow,  
 Give wit, that what is left may shine  
 With equal grace below.

---

## PAIRING-TIME ANTICIPATED.

### A FABLE.

I SHALL not ask Jean Jaques Rousseau,\*  
 If birds confabulate or no ;  
 'Tis clear, that they were always able  
 To hold discourse, at least in fable ;  
 And e'en the child, who knows no better  
 Than to interpret by the letter,  
 A story of a cock and bull,  
 Must have a most uncommon skull.

---

\* It was one of the whimsical speculations of this philosopher, that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals should be withheld from children, as being only vehicles of deception. But what child was ever deceived by them, or can be, against the evidence of his senses?

It chanced, then, on a winter's day,  
 But warm, and bright, and calm as May,  
 The birds, conceiving a design  
 To forestal sweet St. Valentine,  
 In many an orchard, copse, and grove,  
 Assembled on affairs of love,  
 And with much twitter and much chatter,  
 Began to agitate the matter.  
 At length a Bulfinch, who could boast  
 More years and wisdom than the most,  
 Entreated, opening wide his beak,  
 A moment's liberty to speak ;  
 And, silence publicly enjoined,  
 Delivered briefly thus his mind :

My friends ! be cautious how ye treat  
 The subject upon which we meet ;  
 I fear we shall have winter yet.

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,  
 With golden wing, and satin poll,  
 A last year's bird, who ne'er had tried  
 What marriage means, thus pert replied :

Methinks the gentleman, quoth she,  
 Opposite, in the apple tree,  
 By his good will would keep us single  
 Till yonder heaven and earth shall mingle,  
 Or (which is likelier to befall)  
 Till death exterminate us all.  
 I marry without more ado,  
 My dear Dick Redcap, what say you ?

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,  
 Turning short round, strutting and sideling,  
 Attested, glad, his approbation  
 Of an immediate conjugation.

Their sentiments so well expressed  
 Influenced mightily the rest,—  
 All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste  
 The leaves came on not quite so fast,  
 And Destiny, that sometimes bears  
 An aspect stern on man's affairs,  
 Not altogether smiled on theirs.  
 The wind, of late breathed gently forth,  
 Now shifted east, and east by north;  
 Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,  
 Could shelter them from rain or snow,  
 Stepping into their nests, they paddled,  
 Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled;  
 Soon every father bird, and mother,  
 Grew quarrelsome and pecked each other,  
 Parted without the least regret,  
 Except that they had ever met,  
 And learned in future to be wiser,  
 Than to neglect a good adviser.

## MORAL.

Misses! the tale that I relate  
 This lesson seems to carry—  
 Choose not alone a proper mate,  
 But proper time to marry.

---

 THE DOG AND THE WATER-LILY.

## NO FABLE.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs  
 Swept Ouse's silent tide,  
 When, 'scaped from literary cares,  
 I wandered on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,  
And high in pedigree,  
(Two nymphs\* adorned with every grace  
That spaniel found for me)

Now wantoned lost in flags and reeds,  
Now starting into sight,  
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads  
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed  
His lilies newly blown ;  
Their beauties I intent surveyed,  
And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought  
To steer it close to land ;  
But still the prize, though nearly caught,  
Escaped my eager hand.

*Beau* marked my unsuccessful pains  
With fixed considerate face,  
And puzzling set his puppy brains  
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,  
Dispersing all his dream,  
I thence withdrew, and followed long  
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned ;  
*Beau*, trotting far before,

---

\* Sir Robert Gunning's daughters.

The floating wreath again discerned,  
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropped  
Impatient swim to meet  
My quick approach, and soon he dropped  
The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, the world, I cried,  
Shall hear of this thy deed:  
My dog shall mortify the pride  
Of man's superior breed:

But chief myself I will enjoin,  
Awake at duty's call,  
To show a love as prompt as thine  
To Him who gives me all.



## THE POET, THE OYSTER, AND SENSITIVE PLANT.

AN oyster cast upon the shore,  
Was heard, though never heard before,  
Complaining in a speech well worded,  
And worthy thus to be recorded:—  
Ah, hapless wretch! condemned to dwell  
For ever in my native shell;  
Ordnained to move when others please,  
Not for my own content or ease;  
But tossed and buffeted about  
Now *in* the water and now *out*.

'Twere better to be born a stone,  
Of ruder shape, and feeling none,  
Than with a tenderness like mine,  
And sensibilities so fine !

I envy that unfeeling shrub,  
Fast-rooted against every rub.  
The plant he meant grew not far off,  
And felt the sneer with scorn enough ;  
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,  
And with asperity replied.

When, cry the botanists, and stare,  
Did plants called sensitive grow there ?  
No matter when—a poet's muse is  
To make them grow just where she chooses,

You shapeless nothing in a dish,  
You that are but almost a fish,  
I scorn your coarse insinuation,  
And have most plentiful occasion  
To wish myself the rock I view,  
Or such another dolt as you :  
For many a grave and learned clerk,  
And many a gay unlettered spark,  
With curious touch examines me,  
If I can feel as well as he ;  
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,  
Says—Well, 'tis more than one would think !  
Thus life is spent (oh fie upon't)  
In being touched, and crying—Don't !

A poet in his evening walk,  
O'erheard and checked this idle talk,  
And your fine sense, he said, and yours,  
Whatever evil it endures,  
Deserves not, if so soon offended,  
Much to be pitied or commended.



Disputes, though short, are far too long,  
 Where both alike are in the wrong ;  
 Your feelings in their full amount,  
 Are all upon your own account.

You, in your grotto-work enclosed,  
 Complain of being thus exposed ;  
 Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,  
 Save when the knife is at your throat,  
 Wherever driven by wind or tide,  
 Exempt from every ill beside.

And as for you my Lady Squeamish,  
 Who reckon every touch a blemish,  
 If all the plants that can be found  
 Embellishing the scene around,  
 Should droop and wither where they grow,  
 You would not feel at all— not you.  
 The noblest minds their virtue prove  
 By pity, sympathy, and love :  
 These, these are feelings truly fine,  
 And prove their owner half divine.

His censure reached them as he dealt it,  
 And each by shrinking showed he felt it.

---

## THE SHRUBBERY.

WRITTEN IN A TIME OF AFFLICTION.

OH, happy shades—to me unblest !  
 Friendly to peace, but not to me !  
 How ill the scene that offers rest,  
 And heart that cannot rest, agree !

This glassy stream, that spreading pine,  
 Those alders quivering to the breeze,  
 Might sooth a soul less hurt than mine,  
 And please if any thing could please.

But fixed unalterable Care  
 Forgoes not what she feels within,  
 Shows the same sadness every where,  
 And slights the season and the scene

For all that pleased in wood or lawn,  
 While Peace possessed these silent bowers,  
 Her animating smile withdrawn,  
 Has lost its beauties and its powers.

The saint or moralist should tread  
 This moss-grown alley musing, slow ;  
 They seek like me the sacred shade,  
 But not like me to nourish woe !

Me fruitful scenes and prospects waste ;  
 Alike admonish not to roam ;  
 These tell me of enjoyments past,  
 And those of sorrows yet to come.



## THE WINTER NOSEGAY.

WHAT Nature, alas ! has denied  
 To the delicate growth of our isle,  
 Art has in a measure supplied,  
 And Winter is decked with a smile.

See, Mary, what beauties I bring  
 From the shelter of that sunny shed,  
 Where the flowers have the charms of the spring,  
 Though abroad they are frozen and dead.

'Tis a bower of Arcadian sweets,  
 Where Flora is still in her prime,  
 A fortress to which she retreats  
 From the cruel assaults of the clime.  
 While Earth wears a mantle of snow,  
 These pinks are as fresh and as gay  
 As the fairest and sweetest that blow  
 On the beautiful bosom of May.

See how they have safely survived  
 The frowns of a sky so severe ;  
 Such Mary's true love, that has lived  
 Through many a turbulent year.  
 The charms of the late blowing rose  
 Seem graced with a livelier hue,  
 And the winter of sorrow best shows  
 The truth of a friend such as you.



## MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

NECESSARY TO THE HAPPINESS OF THE MARRIED  
 STATE.

THE lady thus addressed her spouse :—  
 What a mere dungeon is this house !  
 By no means large enough ; and was it,  
 Yet this dull room, and that dark closet,

Those hangings with their worn-out graces,  
 Long beards, long noses, and pale faces,  
 Are such an antiquated scene,  
 They overwhelm me with the spleen.  
 Sir Humphrey, shooting in the dark,  
 Makes answer quite beside the mark :  
 No doubt, my dear, I bade him come,  
 Engaged myself to be at home,  
 And shall expect him at the door,  
 Precisely when the clock strikes four.

You are so deaf the lady cried  
 (And raised her voice, and frowned beside,)  
 You are so sadly deaf, my dear,  
 What shall I do to make you hear ?

Dismiss poor Harry ! he replies ;  
 Some people are more nice than wise :  
 For one slight trespass all this stir ?  
 What if he did ride whip and spur,  
 'Twas but a mile—your favourite horse  
 Will never look one hair the worse.

Well, I protest 'tis past all bearing—  
 Child ! I am rather hard of hearing—  
 Yes, truly—one must scream and bawl :  
 I tell you, you can't hear at all !  
 Then, with a voice, exceeding low,  
 No matter if you hear or no.

Alas ! and is domestic strife,  
 That sorest ill of human life,  
 A plague so little to be feared,  
 As to be wantonly incurred,  
 To gratify a fretful passion,  
 On every trivial provocation ?  
 The kindest and the happiest pair  
 Will find occasion to forbear ;

And something every day they live,  
To pity and perhaps forgive,  
But if infirmities, that fall  
In common to the lot of all,  
A blemish or a sense impaired,  
Are crimes so little to be spared,  
Then farewell all that must create  
The comfort of the wedded state;  
Instead of harmony, 'tis jar,  
And tumult, and intestine war.

The love that cheers life's latest stage,  
Proof against sickness and old age,  
Preserved by virtue from declension,  
Becomes not weary of attention;  
But lives, when that exterior grace,  
Which first inspired the flame, decays.  
'Tis gentle, delicate, and kind,  
To faults compassionate or blind,  
And will with sympathy endure  
Those evils it would gladly cure:  
But angry, coarse, and harsh expression  
Shows love to be a mere profession;  
Proves that the heart is none of his,  
Or soon expels him if it is.

---

## THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT.

FORCED from home and all its pleasures,  
Afric's coast I left forlorn;  
To increase a stranger's treasures,  
O'er the raging billows borne.

Men from England bought and sold me,  
 Paid my price in paltry gold ;  
 But, though slave they have enrolled me,  
 Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,  
 What are England's rights, I ask,  
 Me from my delights to sever,  
 Me to torture, me to task ?  
 Fleecy locks and black complexion  
 Cannot forfeit nature's claim ;  
 Skins may differ, but affection  
 Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature  
 Make the plant for which we toil ?  
 Sighs must fan it, tears must water,  
 Sweat of ours must dress the soil.  
 Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,  
 Lolling at your jovial boards ;  
 Think how many backs have smarted  
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,  
 Is there One who reigns on high ?  
 Has he bid you buy and sell us,  
 Speaking from his throne the sky ?  
 Ask him if your knotted scourges,  
 Matches, blood-extorting screws,  
 Are the means that duty urges,  
 Agents of his will to use ?

Hark ! he answers—wild tornadoes,  
 Strewing yonder sea with wrecks ;

Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,  
Are the voice with which he speaks.  
He, foreseeing what vexations  
Afric's sons should undergo,  
Fixed their tyrant's habitations  
Where his whirlwinds answer—no.

By our blood in Afric wasted,  
Ere our necks received the chain ;  
By the miseries that we tasted,  
Crossing in your barks the main ;  
By our sufferings, since ye brought us  
To the man-degrading mart ;  
All, sustained by patience, taught us  
Only by a broken heart :

Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
Till some reason ye shall find  
Worthier of regard, and stronger  
Than the colours of our kind.  
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings  
Tarnish all your boasted powers,  
Prove that you have human feelings,  
Ere you proudly question ours !

## PITY FOR POOR AFRICANS.

---

Video meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor.—

---

I OWN I am shocked at the purchase of slaves,  
And fear those who buy them and sell them, are  
knaves ;  
What I hear of their hardships, their tortures, and  
groans,  
Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.

I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,  
For how could we do without sugar and rum ?  
Especially sugar, so needful we see ?  
What, give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea !

Besides, if we do, the French, Dutch, and Danes,  
Will heartily thank us, no doubt, for our pains ;  
If we do not buy the poor creatures, they will,  
And tortures and groans will be multiplied still.

If foreigners likewise would give up the trade,  
Much more in behalf of your wish might be said ;  
But, while they get riches by purchasing blacks  
Pray tell me why we may not also go snacks ?

Your scruples and arguments bring to my mind  
A story so pat, you may think it is coined,  
On purpose to answer you, out of my mint ;  
But I can assure you I saw it in print.



A youngster at school, more sedate than the rest,  
Had once his integrity put to the test ;  
His comrades had plotted an orchard to rob,  
And asked him to go and assist in the job.

He was shocked, Sir, like you, and answered—" Oh no !  
What ! rob our good neighbour ! I pray you don't go ;  
Besides, the man's poor, his orchard's his bread,  
Then think of his children, for they must be fed."

" You speak very fine, and you look very grave,  
But apples we want, and apples we'll have ;  
If you will go with us, you shall have a share,  
If not, you shall have neither apple nor pear."

They spoke, and Tom pondered—" I see they will go ;  
Poor man ! what a pity to injure him so !  
Poor man ! I would save him his fruit if I could,  
But staying behind will do him no good.

" If the matter depended alone upon me,  
His apples might hang, till they dropped from the tree ;  
But, since they will take them, I think I'll go too,  
He will lose none by me, though I get a few."

His scruples thus silenced, Tom felt more at ease,  
And went with his comrades the apples to seize ;  
He blamed and protested, but joined in the plan ;  
He shared in the plunder, but pitied the man.

## THE MORNING DREAM.

'Twas in the glad season of spring,  
 Asleep at the dawn of the day,  
 I dreamed what I cannot but sing,  
 So pleasant it seemed as I lay.  
 I dreamed, that, on ocean afloat,  
 Far hence to the westward I sailed,  
 While the billows high-lifted the boat,  
 And the fresh-blowing breeze never failed.

In the steerage a woman I saw,  
 Such at least was the form that she wore,  
 Whose beauty impressed me with awe,  
 Ne'er taught me by woman before.  
 She sat, and a shield at her side  
 Shed light, like a sun on the waves,  
 And, smiling divinely, she cried—  
 “ I go to make freemen of slaves ”

Then raising her voice to a strain  
 The sweetest that ear ever heard,  
 She sung of the slave's broken chain,  
 Wherever her glory appeared.  
 Some clouds, which had over us hung,  
 Fled, chased by her melody clear,  
 And methought while she liberty sung,  
 'Twas liberty only to hear.

Thus swiftly dividing the flood,  
 To a slave-cultured island we came,  
 Where, a demon, her enemy, stood—  
 Oppression his terrible name.

In his hand, as the sign of his sway,  
A scourge hung with lashes he bore,  
And stood looking out for his prey  
From Africa's sorrowful shore.

But soon as approaching the land  
That goddess-like woman he viewed,  
The scourge he let fall from his hand,  
With blood of his subjects imbrued.  
I saw him both sicken and die,  
And the moment the monster expired,  
Heard shouts that ascended the sky,  
From thousands with rapture inspired.

Awaking, how could I but muse  
At what such a dream should betide?  
But soon my ear caught the glad news,  
Which served my weak thought for a guide—  
That Britannia, renowned o'er the waves  
For the hatred she ever has shown  
To the black-sceptered rulers of slaves,  
Resolves to have none of her own.



THE  
NIGHTINGALE AND GLOW-WORM.

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long  
Had cheered the village with his song,  
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,  
Nor yet when eventide was ended,  
Began to feel, as well he might,  
The keen demands of appetite ;

When looking eagerly around,  
He spied far off, upon the ground,  
A something shining in the dark,  
And knew the glow-worm by his spark ;  
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,  
He thought to put him in his crop.  
The worm, aware of his intent,  
Harangued him thus, right eloquent—

Did you admire my lamp, quoth he,  
As much as I your minstrelsy,  
You would abhor to do me wrong,  
As much as I to spoil your song ;  
For 'twas the self-same power divine  
Taught you to sing, and me to shine ;  
That you with music, I with light,  
Might beautify and cheer the night.  
The songster heard his short oration,  
And, warbling out his approbation,  
Released him, as my story tells,  
And found a supper somewhere else.

Hence jarring sectaries may learn  
Their real interest to discern ;  
That brother should not war with brother,  
And worry and devour each other ;  
But sing and shine by sweet consent,  
Till life's poor transient night is spent,  
Respecting in each other's case  
The gifts of nature and of grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name,  
Who studiously make peace their aim ;  
Peace both the duty and the prize  
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

## ON A GOLDFINCH

STARVED TO DEATH IN HIS CAGE.

TIME was when I was free as air,  
 The thistle's downy seed my fare,  
 My drink the morning dew ;  
 I perched at will on every spray,  
 My form genteel, my plumage gay,  
 My strains for ever new.

But gaudy plumage, sprightly strain,  
 And form genteel, were all in vain,  
 And of a transient date ;  
 For caught, and caged, and starved to death,  
 In dying sighs my little breath  
 Soon passed the wiry grate.

Thanks, gentle swain, for all my woes,  
 And thanks for this effectual close  
 And cure of every ill !  
 More cruelty could none express ;  
 And I, if you had shown me less,  
 Had been your prisoner still.



THE

## PINE-APPLE AND THE BEE.

THE pine-apples, in triple row,  
 Were basking hot, and all in blow ;  
 A bee of most discerning taste,  
 Perceived the fragrance as he passed ;

On eager wing the spoiler came,  
 And searched for crannies in the frame,  
 Urged his attempt on every side,  
 To every pane his trunk applied ;  
 But still in vain, the frame was tight,  
 And only pervious to the light :  
 Thus having wasted half the day,  
 He trimmed his flight another way.

Methinks, I said, in thee I find  
 The sin and madness of mankind.  
 To joys forbidden man aspires,  
 Consumes his soul with vain desires ;  
 Folly the spring of his pursuit,  
 And disappointment all the fruit.  
 While Cynthio ogles, as she passes,  
 The nymph between two chariot glasses,  
 She is the pine-apple, and he  
 The silly unsuccessful bee.  
 The maid, who views with pensive air  
 The show-glass fraught with glittering ware,  
 Sees watches, bracelets, rings, and lockets,  
 But sighs at thought of empty pockets ;  
 Like thine, her appetite is keen,  
 But ah, the cruel glass between !

Our dear delights are often such,  
 Exposed to view but not to touch ;  
 The sight our foolish heart inflames,  
 We long for pine-apples in frames ;  
 With hopeless wish one looks and lingers ;  
 One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers ;  
 But they whom truth and wisdom lead,  
 Can gather honey from a weed.

## HORACE.

## BOOK II. ODE X.

RECEIVE, dear friend, the truths I teach,  
 So shalt thou live beyond the reach  
     Of adverse Fortune's power ;  
 Not always tempt the distant deep,  
 Nor always timorously creep  
     Along the treach'rous shore.

He, that holds fast the golden mean,  
 And lives contentedly between  
     The little and the great,  
 Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,  
 Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,  
     Imbittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power  
 Of wintry blasts ; the loftiest tower  
     Comes heaviest to the ground ;  
 The bolts that spare the mountain's side,  
 His cloud-capt eminence divide,  
     And spread the ruin round.

The well-informed philosopher  
 Rejoices with a wholesome fear,  
     And hopes, in spite of pain ;  
 If Winter bellow from the north,  
 Soon the sweet Spring comes dancing forth,  
     And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast,  
 The dark appearance will not last :  
     Expect a brighter sky.

The God that strings the silver bow,  
Awakes sometimes the muses too,  
And lays his arrows by.

If hind'rances obstruct thy way,  
Thy magnanimity display,  
And let thy strength be seen ;  
But O! if fortune fill thy sail  
With more than a propitious gale,  
Take half thy canvass in.



A

## REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ODE.

AND is this all? Can Reason do no more,  
Than bid me shun the deep, and dread the shore?  
Sweet moralist! afloat on life's rough sea,  
The Christian has an art unknown to thee.  
He holds no parley with unmanly fears;  
Where duty bids, he confidently steers,  
Faces a thousand dangers at her call,  
And, trusting in his God, surmounts them all.



## THE LILY AND THE ROSE.

THE nymph must lose her female friend,  
If more admired than she—  
But where will fierce contention end,  
If flowers can disagree?



Within the garden's peaceful scene  
    Appeared two lovely foes,  
Aspiring to the rank of queen,  
    The Lily and the Rose.

The Rose soon reddened into rage,  
    And swelling with disdain,  
Appealed to many a poet's page  
    To prove her right to reign.

The Lily's height bespoke command  
    A fair imperial flower ;  
She seemed designed for Flora's hand,  
    The sceptre of her power.

This civil bick'ring and debate  
    The goddess chanced to hear,  
And flew to save, ere yet too late,  
    The pride of the parterre.

Yours is, she said, the nobler hue,  
    And yours the statelier mien ;  
And, till a third surpasses you,  
    Let each be deemed a queen.

Thus, soothed and reconciled, each seeks  
    The fairest British fair :  
The seat of empire is her cheeks,  
    They reign united there.

## IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

HEU inimicitias quoties parit æmula forma,  
 Quam raro pulchræ pulchra placere potest ?  
 Sed fines ultra solitos discordia tendit,  
 Cum flores ipsos bilis et ira movent.

Hortus ubi dulces præbet tacitosque recessus,  
 Se rapit in partes gens animosa duas ;  
 Hic sibi regales Amaryllis candida cultus,  
 Illic purpureo vindicat ore Rosa.

Ira Rosam et meritis quæsita superbia tangunt,  
 Multaque ferventi vix cohibenda sinu,  
 Dum sibi fautorum ciet undique nomina vatam,  
 Jusque suum, multo carmine fulta, probat.

Altior emicat illa, et celso vertice nūtat,  
 Ceu flores inter non habitura parem,  
 Fastiditque alios, et nata videtur in usus  
 Imperii, sceptrum, Flora quod ipsa gerat

Nec Dea non sensit civilis murmura rixæ,  
 Cui curæ est pictas pandere ruris opes,  
 Deliciasque suas nunquam non prompta tueri,  
 Dum licet et locus est, ut tueatur, adest.

Et tibi forma datur procerior omnibus, inquit ;  
 Et tibi, principibus qui solet esse, color ;  
 Et donec vincat quædam formosior ambas,  
 Et tibi reginæ nomen, et esto tibi.

His ubi sedatus furor est, petit utraque nympham,  
Qualem inter Veneres Anglia sola parit ;  
Hanc penes imperium est, nihil optant amplius, hujus  
Regnant in nitidis, et sine lite, genis.



## THE POPLAR FIELD.

THE poplars are felled, farewell to the shade,  
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade ;  
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,  
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed, since I last took a view  
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew ;  
And now in the grass behold they are laid,  
And the tree is my seat, that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat,  
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat,  
And the scene, where his melody charmed me before,  
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,  
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,  
With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,  
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if any thing can,  
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man ;

Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,  
Have a being less durable even than he.\*

—◆—

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

POPULÆ cecidit gratissima copia silviæ,  
Conticuere susurri, omnisque evanuit umbra.  
Nullæ jam levibus se miscent fröndibus auræ,  
Et nulla in fluvio ramorum ludit imago.

Hei mihi! bis senos dum luctu torqueor annos,  
His cogor silvis suetoque carere recessu,  
Cum sero rediens, stratasque in gramine cernens.  
In sedi arboribus, sub queis errare solebam.

Ah ubi nunc merulæ cantus? Felicior illum  
Silva tegit, duræ nondum permissa bipenni;  
Scilicet exustos colles camposque patentés  
Odit, et indignans et non rediturus abivit.

Sed qui succisas doleo succidar et ipse,  
Et prius huic parilis quam creverit altera silva  
Flebor, et, exequiis parvis donatus, habebó  
Defixum lapidem tumulique cubantis acervum,

Tam subito periisse videns tam digna manere,  
Agnosco humanas sortes et tristia fata—  
Sit licet ipse brevis, volucrique simillinus umbræ,  
Est homini brevior citiusque obitura voluptas.

---

\* Mr. Cowper afterwards altered this last stanza in the following manner:—

The change both my heart and my fancy employs,  
I reflect on the frailty of man, and his joys;  
Short-lived as we are, yet our pleasures, we see,  
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

## VOTUM.

O MATUTINI rores, auræque salubres,  
 O nemora, et lætæ rivis felicibus herbæ,  
 Graminei colles, et amœnæ in vallibus umbræ !  
 Fata modo dederint quas olim in rure paterno,  
 Delicias, procul arte, procul formidine novi,  
 Quam vellem ignotus, quod mens mea semper avebat,  
 Ante larem proprium placidam expectare senectam,  
 Tum demum, exactis non infeliciter annis,  
 Sortiri tacitum lapidem, aut sub cespite condi !


  
 CICINDELA.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

SUB sepe exiguum est, nec raro in margine ripæ  
 Reptile, quod lucet nocte, dieque latet.  
 Vermis habet speciem, sed habet de lumine nomen ;  
 At prisca a fama non liquet, unde micet.  
 Plerique a cauda credunt procedere lumen ;  
 Nec desunt, credunt qui rutilare caput.  
 Nam superas stellas quæ nox accendit, et illi  
 Parcam eadem lucem dat, moduloque parem.  
 Forsitan hoc prudens voluit Natura caveri,  
 Ne pede quis duro reptile contereret :  
 Exiguam, in tenebris ne gressum offenderet ullus,  
 Prætendi voluit forsitan illa facem.  
 Sive usum hunc Natura parens, seu maluit illum,  
 Haud frustra accensa est lux, radiique dati.  
 Ponite vos fastus, humiles nec spernite, magni ;  
 Quando habet et minimum reptile, quod niteat.

## I. THE GLOW-WORM.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

BENEATH the hedge, or near the stream,  
 A worm is known to stray ;  
 That shows by night a lucid beam,  
 Which disappears by day.

Disputes have been, and still prevail,  
 From whence his rays proceed ;  
 Some give that honour to his tail,  
 And others to his head.

But this is sure—the hand of night,  
 That kindles up the skies,  
 Gives *him* a modicum of light  
 Proportioned to his size.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,  
 By such a lamp bestowed,  
 To bid the trav'ler, as he went,  
 Be careful where he trod :

Nor crush a worm, whose useful light  
 Might serve, however small,  
 To show a stumbling-stone by night,  
 And save him from a fall.

Whate'er she meant, this truth divine  
 Is legible and plain,  
 'Tis power almighty bids him shine,  
 Nor bids him shine in vain.

Ye proud and wealthy, let this theme  
 Teach humbler thoughts to you,  
 Since such a reptile has its gem,  
 And boasts its splendour too.



## CORNICULA.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

NIGRAS inter aves avis est, quæ plurima turres,  
 Antiquas ædes, celsaque fana colit.  
 Nil tam sublime est, quod non audace volatu,  
 Aëriis spernens inferiora, petit.  
 Quo nemo ascendat, cui non vertigo cerebrum  
 Corripiat, certe hunc seligit illa locum.  
 Quo vix a terra tu suspicis absque tremore,  
 Illa metus expers incolumisque sedet.  
 Lamina delubri supra fastigia ventus  
 Qua cœli spiret de regione, docet;  
 Hanc ea præ reliquis mavult, segura pericli,  
 Nec curat, nedum cogitat, unde cadat.  
 Res inde humanas, sed summa per otia, spectat,  
 Et nihil ad sese, quas videt, esse videt.  
 Concursus spectat, plateaque negotia in omni,  
 Omnia pro nugis at sapienter habet.  
 Clamores, quas infra audit, si forsitan audit,  
 Pro rebus nihili negligit, et crocitat.  
 Ille tibi invidet, felix Cornicula, pennas,  
 Qui sic humanis rebus abesse velit.

## II. THE JACKDAW.

## TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

THERE is a bird, who by his coat,  
 And by the hoarseness of his note,  
     Might be supposed a crow ;  
 A great frequenter of the church,  
 Where bishop-like he finds a perch,  
     And dormitory too.

Above the steeple shines a plate,  
 That turns and turns, to indicate  
     From what point blows the weather ;  
 Look up—your brains begin to swim,  
 'Tis in the clouds—that pleases him,  
     He chooses it the rather.

Fond of the speculative height,  
 Thither he wings his airy flight  
     And thence securely sees  
 The bustle and the rareeshow,  
 That occupy mankind below,  
     Secure and at his ease.

You think, no doubt, he sits and muses  
 On future broken bones and bruises  
     If he should chance to fall.  
 No ; not a single thought like that  
 Employs his philosophic pate,  
     Or troubles it at all.

He sees that this great roundabout,  
 The world, with all its motley rout,  
     Church, army, physic, law ;



Its customs, and its businesses,  
 Is no concern at all of his,  
 And says—what says he?—Caw.

Thrice happy bird! I too have seen  
 Much of the vanities of men;  
 And, sick of having seen 'em,  
 Would cheerfully these limbs resign  
 For such a pair of wings as thine,  
 And such a head between 'em.



## AD GRILLUM.

*Anacreonticum.*

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

O QUI meæ culinæ  
 Argutulus choraules,  
 Et hospes es canorus,  
 Quacunq̄ue commoreris,  
 Felicitatis omen;  
 Jucundiore cantu  
 Siquando me salutes,  
 Et ipse te repondam,  
 Et ipse, qua valebo,  
 Remunerabo musa.

Diceris innocensque  
 Et gratus inquilinus;  
 Nec victitans rapinis,  
 Ut sorices voraces,  
 Muresve curiosi,

Furumque delicatum  
 Vulgus domesticorum;  
 Sed tutus in camini  
 Recessibus, quiete  
 Contentus et calore.

Beatior Cicada,  
 Quæ te referre forma,  
 Quæ voce te videtur;  
 Et saltitans per herbas,  
 Unius, haud secundæ,  
 Æstatis est chorista:  
 Tu carmen integratum  
 Reponis ad Decembrem,  
 Lætus per universum  
 Incontinenter annum.

Te nulla lux relinquit,  
 Te nulla nox revisit,  
 Non musicæ vacantem,  
 Curisve non solutum:  
 Quin amplius canendo,  
 Quin amplius fruendo,  
 Ætatulam, vel omni,  
 Quam nos homunciones  
 Absumimus querendo,  
 Ætate longiorem.



### III. THE CRICKET.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

LITTLE inmate, full of mirth,  
 Chirping on my kitchen hearth,

Wheresoe'er be thine abode,  
Always harbinger of good,  
Pay me for thy warm retreat  
With a song more soft and sweet ;  
In return thou shalt receive  
Such a strain as I can give.

Thus thy praise shall be expressed,  
Inoffensive, welcome guest !  
While the rat is on the scout,  
And the mouse with curious snout,  
With what vermin else infest  
Every dish, and spoil the best ;  
Frisking thus before the fire,  
Thou hast all thine heart's desire.

Though in voice and shape they be  
Formed as if akin to thee,  
Thou surpassesst, happier far,  
Happiest grasshoppers that are ;  
Theirs is but a summer's song,  
Thine endures the winter long,  
Unimpaired, and shrill, and clear,  
Melody throughout the year.

Neither night, nor dawn of day,  
Puts a period to thy play :  
Sing then—and extend thy span  
Far beyond the date of man.  
Wretched man, whose years are spent  
In repining discontent,  
Lives not, aged though he be,  
Half a span, compared with thee.

## SIMILE AGIT IN SIMILE.

BY VINCENT BOURNE.

CRISTATUS, pictisque ad Thaida Psittacus alis,  
 Missus ab Eoo munus amante venit.  
 Ancillis mandat primam formare loquelam,  
 Archididascaliæ dat sibi Thais opus,  
 Psittace, at Thais, fingitque sonantia molle  
 Basia, quæ docilis molle refingit avis.  
 Jam captat, jam dimidiat tyrunculus; et jam  
 Integrat auditos articulatque sonos.  
 Psittace mi pulcher pulchelle, hera dicit alumnc  
 Psittace mi pulcher, reddit alumnus heræ.  
 Jamque canit, ridet, deciesque ægrotat in hora,  
 Et vocat ancillas nomine quamque suo.  
 Multaque scurratur mendax, et multa jocatur,  
 Et lepidò populum detinet augurio.  
 Nunc tremulum illudet fratrem, qui suspicit, et Pol!  
 Carnalis, quisquis te docet, inquit, homo est;  
 Argutæ nunc stridet anus argutulus instar;  
 Respicit, et nebulo es, quisquis es, inquit anus.  
 Quando fuit melior tyro, meliorve magistra!  
 Quando duo ingeniis tam coiere pares!  
 Ardua discenti nulla est, res nulla docenti  
 Ardua! cum doceat fœmina, discat avis.

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 IV. THE PARROT.

TRANSLATION OF THE FOREGOING.

IN painted plumes superbly dressed,  
 A native of the gorgeous east,  
 By many a billow tossed,

Poll gains at length the British shore,  
Part of the captain's precious store,  
A present to his toast.

Belinda's maids are soon preferred,  
To teach him now and then a word,  
As Poll can master it ;  
But 'tis her own important charge,  
To qualify him more at large,  
And make him quite a wit.

Sweet Poll ! his doating mistress cries,  
Sweet Poll ! the mimic bird replies ;  
And calls aloud for sack.  
She next instructs him in the kiss ;  
'Tis now a little one, like Miss,  
And now a hearty smack.

At first he aims at what he hears ;  
And, list'ning close with both his ears,  
Just catches at the sound ;  
But soon articulates aloud,  
Much to the amusement of the crowd,  
And stuns the neighbours round.

A querulous old woman's voice  
His hum'rous talent next employs ;  
He scolds, and gives the lie.  
And now he sings, and now is sick,  
Here Sally, Susan, come, come quick,  
Poor Poll is like to die !

Belinda and her bird ! 'tis rare  
To meet with such a well-matched pair,  
The language and the tone,

Each character in every part,  
Sustained with so much grace and art,  
And both in unison.

When children first begin to spell,  
And stammer out a syllable,  
We think them tedious creatures :  
But difficulties soon abate,  
When birds are to be taught to prate,  
And women are the teachers.



TRANSLATION OF  
PRIOR'S CHLOE AND EUPHELIA.

MERCATOR, vigiles oculos ut fallere possit,  
Nomine sub ficto trans mare mittit opes ;  
Lene sonat liquidumque meis Euphelia chordis,  
Sed solam exoptant te, mea vota, Chloe.

Ad speculum ornabat nitidos Euphelia crines,  
Cum dixit mea lux, Heus, cane, sume lyram.  
Namque lyram juxta positam cum carmine vidit,  
Suave quidem carmen dulcisonamque lyram.

Fila lyræ vocemque paro, suspiria surgunt,  
Et miscent numeris murmura mœsta meis,  
Dumque tuæ memoro laudes, Euphelia, formæ,  
Tota anima interea pendet ab ore Chloes.

Subrabet illa pudore, et contrahit altera frontem,  
Me torquet mea mens conscia, psallo, tremo ;  
Atque Cupidinea dixit Dea cincta corona,  
Heu ! fallendi artem quam didicere parum.

## THE DIVERTING

## HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN ;

*Showing how he went farther than he intended, and came safe home again.*

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen  
 Of credit and renown,  
 A train-band captain eke was he  
 Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,  
 Though wedded we have been  
 These twice ten tedious years, yet we  
 No holiday have seen.

To-morrow is our wedding-day,  
 And we will then repair  
 Unto the Bell at Edmonton  
 All in a chaise and pair.

My sister and my sister's child,  
 Myself, and children three,  
 Will fill the chaise; so you must ride  
 On horseback after we.

He soon replied, I do admire  
 Of womankind but one,  
 And you are she, my dearest dear,  
 Therefore it shall be done.

I am a linendraper bold,  
As all the world doth know,  
And my good friend the calender  
Will lend his horse to go.

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, That's well said ;  
And for that wine is dear,  
We will be furnished with our own,  
Which is both bright and clear

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife ;  
O'erjoyed was he to find,  
That, though on pleasure she was bent,  
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,  
But yet was not allowed  
To drive up to the door, lest all  
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,  
Where they did all get in ;  
Six precious souls, and all agog  
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels.  
Were never folks so glad,  
The stones did rattle underneath,  
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side  
Seized fast the flowing mane,  
And up he got, in haste to ride,  
But soon came down again ;



For saddletree scarce reached had he,  
His journey to begin,  
When, turning round his head, he saw  
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,  
Although it grieved him sore,  
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew  
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers  
Were suited to their mind,  
When Betty screaming came down stairs,  
“The wine is left behind!”

Good lack! quoth he—yet bring it me,  
My leathern belt likewise,  
In which I bear my trusty sword,  
When I do exercise.

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)  
Had two stone bottles found,  
To hold the liquor that she loved,  
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,  
Through which the belt he drew,  
And hung a bottle on each side,  
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be  
Equipped from top to toe,  
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,  
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again  
Upon his nimble steed,  
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,  
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road  
Beneath his well-shod feet,  
The snorting beast began to trot,  
Which galled him in his seat.

So, Fair and softly, John he cried,  
But John he cried in vain ;  
That trot became a gallop soon,  
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must,  
Who cannot sit upright,  
He grasped the mane with both his hands,  
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort  
Had handled been before,  
What thing upon his back had got  
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought ;  
Away went hat and wig ;  
He little dreamed, when he set out,  
Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,  
Like streamer long and gay,  
Till loop and button failing both,  
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern  
The bottles he had slung ;  
A bottle swinging at each side,  
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,  
Up flew the windows all ;  
And every soul cried out, Well done !  
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he ?  
His fame soon spread around,  
He carries weight ! he rides a race !  
'Tis for a thousand pound !

And still, as fast as he drew near,  
'Twas wonderful to view,  
How in a trice the turnpike men  
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down  
His reeking head full low,  
The bottles twain behind his back  
Were shattered at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road,  
Most piteous to be seen,  
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke  
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,  
With leathern girdle braced ;  
For all might see the bottle necks  
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington  
These gambols he did play,  
Until he came unto the Wash  
Of Edmonton so gay ;

And there he threw the wash about  
On both sides of the way,  
Just like unto a trundling mop,  
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife  
From the balcony spied  
Her tender husband, wondering much  
To see how he did ride.

Stop, stop, John Gilpin !—Here's the house—  
They all at once did cry ;  
The dinner waits, and we are tired ;  
Said Gilpin—so am I !

But yet his horse was not a whit  
Inclined to tarry there ;  
For why !—his owner had a house  
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,  
Shot by an archer strong ;  
So did he fly—which brings me to  
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,  
And sore against his will,  
Till at his friend the calender's  
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see  
His neighbour in such trim,  
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,  
And thus accosted him :

What news ? what news ? your tidings tell ;  
Tell me you must and shall—  
Say why bareheaded you are come,  
Or why you come at all ?

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,  
And loved a timely joke ;  
And thus unto the calender  
In merry guise he spoke :

I came because your horse would come ;  
And, if I well forbode,  
My hat and wig will soon be here,  
They are upon the road.

The calender, right glad to find  
His friend in merry pin,  
Returned him not a single word,  
But to the house went in ;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig ;  
A wig that flowed behind,  
A hat not much the worse for wear,  
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn  
Thus showed his ready wit ;  
My head is twice as big as yours,  
They therefore needs must fit.

But let me scrape the dirt away  
That hangs upon your face ;  
And stop and eat, for well you may  
Be in a hungry case.

Said John—It is my wedding-day,  
And all the world would stare,  
If wife should dine at Edmonton,  
And I should dine at Ware.

So turning to his horse, he said,  
I am in haste to dine ;  
'Twas for your pleasure you come here,  
You shall go back for mine.

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast !  
For which he paid full dear ;  
For, while he spake, a braying ass  
Did sing most loud and clear ;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he  
Had heard a lion roar,  
And galloped off with all his might,  
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away  
Went Gilpin's hat and wig :  
He lost them sooner than at first,  
For why ?—they were too big.

Now Mrs. Gilpin when she saw  
Her husband posting down  
Into the country far away,  
She pulled out half a crown ;

And thus unto the youth she said,  
That drove them to the Bell,  
This shall be yours, when you bring back  
My husband safe and well.

The youth did ride, and soon did meet  
John coming back amain ;  
Whom in a trice he tried to stop,  
By catching at his rein ;

But not performing what he meant,  
And gladly would have done,  
The frightened steed he frightened more,  
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away  
Went postboy at his heels,  
The postboy's horse right glad to miss  
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,  
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,  
With postboy scampering in the rear,  
They raised the hue and cry :—

Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman  
Not one of them was mute ;  
And all and each that passed that way  
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again  
Flew open in short space ;  
The toll-men thinking as before,  
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,  
 For he got first to town ;  
 Nor stopped till where he had got up  
 He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,  
 And Gilpin long live he ;  
 And, when he next doth ride abroad,  
 May I be there to see !

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## AN EPISTLE.

TO AN AFFLICTED PROTESTANT LADY IN FRANCE.

MADAM,

A STRANGER'S purpose in these lays  
 Is to congratulate, and not to praise.  
 To give the creature the Creator's due  
 Were sin in me, and an offence to you.  
 From man to man, or e'en to woman paid,  
 Praise is the medium of a knavish trade,  
 A coin by craft for folly's use designed,  
 Spurious, and only current with the blind.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
 Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown :  
 No trav'ler ever reached that blest abode,  
 Who found not thorns and briars in his road.  
 The World may dance along the flowery plain,  
 Cheered as they go by many a sprightly strain,  
 Where Nature has her mossy velvet spread  
 With unshod feet they yet securely tread,  
 Admonished, scorn the caution and the friend,  
 Bent all on pleasure, heedless of its end.



But He, who knew what human hearts would prove,  
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,  
That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,  
A life of ease would make them harder still,  
In pity to the souls his grace designed  
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,  
Called for a cloud to darken all their years,  
And said, "Go, spend them in the vale of tears."  
O balmy gales of soul-reviving air !  
O salutary streams that murmur there !  
These flowing from the fount of grace above,  
Those breathed from lips of everlasting love.  
The flinty soil indeed their feet annoys ;  
Chill blasts of trouble nip their springing joys ;  
An envious world will interpose its frown,  
To mar delights superior to its own ;  
And many a pang, experienced still within,  
Reminds them of their hated inmate, Sin ;  
But ills of every shape and every name,  
Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim ;  
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast,  
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Ah, be not sad, although thy lot be cast  
Far from the flock, and in a boundless waste !  
No shepherds' tents within thy view appear,  
But the chief Shepherd even there is near ;  
Thy tender sorrows and thy plaintive strain  
Flow in a foreign land, but not in vain ;  
Thy tears all issue from a source divine,  
And every drop bespeaks a Saviour thine—  
So once in Gideon's fleece the dews were found,  
And drought on all the drooping herbs around.

TO THE

REV. W. CAWTHORNE UNWIN.

UNWIN, I should but ill repay  
 The kindness of a friend,  
 Whose worth deserves as warm a lay  
 As ever friendship penned,  
 Thy name omitted in a page,  
 That would reclaim a vicious age.

A union formed, as mine with thee,  
 Not rashly, or in sport.  
 May be as fervent in degree,  
 And faithful in its sort,  
 And may as rich in comfort prove,  
 As that of true fraternal love.

The bud inserted in the rind,  
 The bud of peach or rose,  
 Adorns, though differing in its kind,  
 The stock whereon it grows,  
 With flower as sweet, or fruit as fair,  
 As if produced by Nature there.

Not rich, I render what I may,  
 I seize thy name in haste,  
 And place it in this first essay,  
 Lest this should prove the last.  
 'Tis where it should be—in a plan,  
 That holds in view the good of man.

The poet's lyre, to fix his fame,  
 Should be the poet's heart ;  
 Affection lights a brighter flame  
 Than ever blazed by art.  
 No muses on these lines attend,  
 I sink the poet in the friend.

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AN EPISTLE TO JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.

DEAR JOSEPH—five and twenty years ago—  
 Alas how time escapes !—'tis even so—  
 With frequent intercourse, and always sweet,  
 And always friendly, we were wont to cheat  
 A tedious hour—and now we never meet !  
 As some grave gentleman in Terence says,  
 ('Twas therefore much the same in ancient days,)  
 Good lack, we know not what to-morrow brings—  
 Strange fluctuation of all human things !  
 True. Changes will befall, and friends may part,  
 But distance only cannot change the heart :  
 And, were I called to prove the assertion true,  
 One proof should serve—a reference to you.

Whence comes it then, that in the wane of life,  
 Though nothing have occurred to kindle strife,  
 We find the friends we fancied we had won,  
 Though numerous once, reduced to few or none ?  
 Can gold grow worthless that has stood the touch ?  
 No ; gold they seemed, but they were never such.

Horatio's servant once, with bow and cringe,  
 Swinging the parlour-door upon its hinge,  
 Dreading a negative and overawed  
 Lest he should tresspass, begged to go abroad.

Go, fellow !—whither ?—turning short about—  
 Nay. Stay at home—you're always going out.  
 'Tis but a step, Sir, just at the street's end.—  
 For what ?—An't please you, Sir, to see a friend.—  
 A friend ! Horatio cried, and seemed to start—  
 Yea, marry shalt thou, and with all my heart.—  
 And fetch my cloak ; for, though the night be raw,  
 I'll see him too, the first I ever saw.

I knew the man, and knew his nature mild,  
 And was his plaything often when a child ;  
 But somewhat at that moment pinched him close,  
 Else he was seldom bitter or morose.  
 Perhaps his confidence just then betrayed,  
 His grief might prompt him with the speech he made ;  
 Perhaps 'twas mere good humour gave it birth,  
 The harmless play of pleasantry and mirth.  
 Howe'er it was, his language, in my mind,  
 Bespoke at least a man that knew mankind.

But not to moralize too much, and strain  
 To prove an evil, of which all complain,  
 (I hate long arguments verbosely spun,)  
 One story more, dear Hill, and I have done.  
 Once on a time an emperor, a wise man,  
 No matter where, in China or Japan,  
 Decreed, that whosoever should offend  
 Against the well-known duties of a friend,  
 Convicted once, should after wear  
 But half a coat, and show his bosom bare.  
 The punishment importing this, no doubt,  
 That all was naught within, and all found out.

O happy Britain ! we have not to fear  
 Such hard and arbitrary measures here ;  
 Else, could a law, like that which I relate,  
 Once have the sanction of our triple state,

Some few, that I have known in days of old,  
Would run most dreadful risk of catching cold ;  
While you, my friend, whatever wind should blow,  
Might traverse England safely to and fro,  
An honest man, close-buttoned to the chin,  
Broad cloth without, and a warm heart within.



TO THE  
REVEREND MR. NEWTON.

*An Invitation into the Country.*

THE swallows in their torpid state  
Compose their useless wing,  
And bees in hives as idly wait  
The call of early Spring.

The keenest frost that binds the stream,  
The wildest wind that blows,  
Are neither felt nor feared by them,  
Secure of their repose.

But man, all feeling and awake,  
The gloomy scene surveys ;  
With present ills his heart must ache,  
And pant for brighter days.

Old Winter, halting o'er the mead,  
Bids me and Mary mourn ;  
But lovely Spring peeps o'er his head,  
And whispers your return.

Then April, with her sister May,  
 Shall chase him from the bowers,  
 And weave fresh garlands every day,  
 To crown the smiling hours.

And if a tear, that speaks regret  
 Of happier times, appear,  
 A glimpse of joy, that we have met,  
 Shall shine and dry the tear.

---

## CATHARINA.

ADDRESSED TO MISS STAPLETON,

(NOW MRS. COURTNEY.)

SHE came—she is gone—we have met—  
 And meet perhaps never again ;  
 The sun of that moment is set,  
 And seems to have risen in vain.  
 Catharina has fled like a dream—  
 (So vanishes pleasure, alas !)  
 But has left a regret and esteem,  
 That will not so suddenly pass.

The last evening ramble we made,  
 Catharina, Maria, and I,  
 Our progress was often delayed,  
 By the nightingale warbling nigh.  
 We paused under many a tree,  
 And much she was charmed with the tone,  
 Less sweet to Maria and me,  
 Who so lately had witnessed her own.

My numbers that day she had sung,  
And gave them a grace so divine,  
As only her musical tongue  
Could infuse into numbers of mine.  
The longer I heard, I esteemed  
The work of my fancy the more,  
And e'en to myself never seemed  
So tuneful a poet before.

Though the pleasures of London exceed  
In number the days of the year,  
Catharina, did nothing impede,  
Would feel herself happier here ;  
For the close-woven arches of limes  
On the banks of our river, I know,  
Are sweeter to her many times  
Than aught that the city can show.

So it is, when the mind is endued  
With a well-judging taste from above ;  
Then, whether embellished or rude,  
'Tis nature alone that we love.  
The achievements of art may amuse,  
May even our wonder excite,  
But groves, hills, and valleys, diffuse  
A lasting, a sacred delight.

Since then in the rural recess  
Catharina alone can rejoice,  
May it still be her lot to possess  
The scene of her sensible choice !  
To inhabit a mansion remote  
From the clatter of street-pacing steeds,  
And by Philomel's annual note  
To measure the life that she leads.

With her book, and her voice, and her lyre,  
To wing all her moments at home ;  
And with scenes that new rapture inspire,  
As oft as it suits her to roam ;  
She will have just the life she prefers,  
With little to hope or to fear,  
And ours would be pleasant as hers,  
Might we view her enjoying it here.



## THE MORALIZER CORRECTED.

### A TALE.

A HERMIT, (or if 'chance you hold  
That title now too trite and old,)  
A man, once young, who lived retired  
As hermit could have well desired,  
His hours of study closed at last,  
And finished his concise repast,  
Stopp'd his cruse, replaced his book  
Within its customary nook,  
And, staff in hand, set forth to share  
The sober cordial of sweet air,  
Like Isaac, with a mind applied  
To serious thought at evening-tide.  
Autumnal rains had made it chill,  
And from the trees that fringed his hill,  
Shades slanting at the close of day  
Chilled more his else delightful way.  
Distant a little mile he spied  
A western bank's still sunny side,



And right toward the favoured place  
Proceeding with his nimblest pace,  
In hope to bask a little yet,  
Just reached it when the sun was set.

Your hermit, young and jovial sirs !  
Learns something from whate'er occurs  
And hence he said, my mind computes  
The real worth of man's pursuits.  
His object chosen, wealth or fame,  
Or other sublunary game,  
Imagination to his view  
Presents it decked with every hue,  
That can seduce him not to spare  
His powers of best exertion there,  
But youth, health, vigour, to expend  
On so desirable an end.  
Ere long approach life's evening shades,  
The glow, that fancy gave it, fades ;  
And, earned too late, it wants the grace  
That first engaged him in the chase.

True, answered an angelic guide,  
Attendant at the senior's side—  
But whether all the time it cost,  
To urge the fruitless chase be lost,  
Must be decided by the worth  
Of that which called his ardour forth.  
Trifles pursued, whate'er the event,  
Must cause him shame or discontent ;  
A vicious object still is worse,  
Successful there he wins a curse ;  
But he, whom e'en in life's last stage  
Endeavours laudable engage,  
Is paid, at least in peace of mind,  
And sense of having well designed ;

And if, ere he attain his end,  
 His sun precipitate descend,  
 A brighter prize than that he meant  
 Shall recompense his mere intent.  
 No virtuous wish can bear a date  
 Either too early or too late.

---

### THE FAITHFUL BIRD.

THE greenhouse is my summer seat ;  
 My shrubs, displaced from that retreat,  
     Enjoyed the open air ;  
 Two goldfinches, whose sprightly song  
 Had been their mutual solace long,  
     Lived happy prisoners there.

They sang as blithe as finches sing,  
 That flutter loose on golden wing,  
     And frolic where they list ;  
 Strangers to liberty 'tis true,  
 But that delight they never knew,  
     And therefore never missed.

But nature works in every breast,  
 With force not easily suppressed ;  
     And Dick felt some desires,  
 That, after many an effort vain,  
 Instructed him at length to gain,  
     A pass between his wires.

The open windows seemed to invite  
 The freeman to a farewell flight ;  
     But Tom was still confined ;

And Dick, although his way was clear,  
Was much too generous and sincere,  
To leave his friend behind.

So settling on his cage, by play,  
And chirp, and kiss, he seemed to say,  
You must not live alone—  
Nor would he quit that chosen stand,  
Till I, with slow and cautious hand,  
Returned him to his own.

O ye, who never taste the joys  
Of Friendship, satisfied with noise,  
Fandango, ball, and rout !  
Blush, when I tell you how a bird,  
A prison with a friend preferred  
To liberty without.



## THE NEEDLESS ALARM.

A TALE.

THERE is a field, through which I often pass,  
Thick overspread with moss and silky grass,  
Adjoining close to Kilwick's echoing wood,  
Where oft the bitch fox hides her hapless brood,  
Reserved to solace many a neighbouring squire,  
That he may follow them through brake and brier,  
Contusion hazarding of neck, or spine,  
Which rural gentlemen call sport divine.  
A narrow brook, by rushy banks concealed,  
Runs in a bottom, and divides the field ;

Oaks intersperse it, that had once a head,  
 But now wear crests of oven-wood instead ;  
 And where the land slopes to its watery bourn,  
 Wide yawns a gulf beside a ragged thorn ;  
 Bricks line the sides, but shivered long ago,  
 And horrid brambles intertwine below ;  
 A hollow scooped, I judge, in ancient time,  
 For baking earth, or burning rock to lime.

Nor yet the hawthorn bore her berries red,  
 With which the fieldfare, wintry guest, is fed ;  
 Nor Autumn yet had brushed from every spray,  
 With her chill hand, the mellow leaves away ;  
 But corn was housed, and beans were in the stack,  
 Now therefore issued forth the spotted pack,  
 With tails high mounted, ears hung low, and throats,  
 With a whole gamut filled of heavenly notes,  
 For which, alas ! my destiny severe,  
 Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.

The Sun, accomplishing his early march,  
 His lamp now planted on Heaven's topmost arch,  
 When, exercise and air my only aim,  
 And heedless whither, to that field I came,  
 Ere yet with ruthless joy the happy hound,  
 Told hill and dale that Reynard's track was found,  
 Or with the high-raised horn's melodious clang  
 All Kilwick and all Dingleberry\* rang.

Sheep grazed the field ; some with soft bosom  
 pressed  
 The herb as soft, while nibbling strayed the rest ;  
 Nor noise was heard but of the hasty brook,  
 Struggling, detained in many a petty nook.

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\* Two woods belonging to John Throckmorton, Esq.

All seemed so peaceful, that, from them conveyed,  
To me their peace by kind contagion spread.

But when the huntsman, with distended cheek,  
'Gan make his instrument of music speak,  
And from within the wood that crash was heard,  
Though not a hound from whom it burst appeared,  
The sheep recumbent, and the sheep that grazed,  
All huddling into phalanx, stood and gazed,  
Admiring, terrified, the novel strain,  
Then coursed the field around, and coursed it round  
again ;

But, recollecting with a sudden thought,  
That flight in circles urged advanced them nought,  
They gathered close around the old pit's brink,  
And thought again—but knew not what to think:

The man to solitude accustomed long  
Perceives in every thing that lives a tongue ;  
Not animals alone, but shrubs and trees  
Have speech for him, and understood with ease ;  
After long drought, when rains abundant fall,  
He hears the herbs and flowers rejoicing all ;  
Knows what the freshness of their hue implies,  
How glad they catch the largess of the skies ;  
But, with precision nicer still, the mind  
He scans of every locomotive kind ;  
Birds of all feather, beasts of every name,  
That serve mankind, or shun them, wild or tame ;  
The looks and gestures of their griefs and fears  
Have all articulation in his ears ;  
He spells them true by intuition's light,  
And needs no glossary to set him right.

This truth premised was needful as a text,  
To win due credence to what follows next . . .

A while they mused ; surveying every face,  
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race ;  
Their periwigs of wool, and fears combined,  
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,  
That sage they seemed, as lawyer's o'er a doubt,  
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out ;  
Or academic tutors, teaching youths,  
Sure ne'er to want them, mathematic truths ;  
When thus a mutton statelier than the rest,  
A ram, the ewes and wethers sad addressed :—

Friends ! we have lived too long. I never heard  
Sounds such as these, so worthy to be feared.  
Could I believe, that winds for ages pent  
In earth's dark womb have found at last a vent,  
And from their prison-house below arise,  
With all these hideous howlings to the skies,  
I could be much composed, nor should appear,  
For such a cause, to feel the slightest fear.  
Yourselves have seen, what time the thunders rolled,  
All night, me resting quiet in the fold.  
Or heard we that tremendous bray alone,  
I could expound the melancholy tone ;  
Should deem it by our old companion made,  
The ass ; for he, we know, has lately strayed,  
And being lost perhaps and wandering wide,  
Might be supposed to clamour for a guide.  
But ah ! those dreadful yells what soul can hear  
That owns a carcass, and not quake for fear ?  
Demons produce them doubtless, brazen-clawed  
And fanged with brass, the demons are abroad ;  
I hold it therefore wisest and most fit,  
That, life to save, we leap into the pit.

Him answered then his loving mate and true,  
But more discreet than he, a Cambrian ewe.

How? leap into the pit our life to save?  
To save our life leap all into the grave?  
For can we find it less? Contemplate first  
The depth how awful! falling there, we burst:  
Or should the brambles, interposed, our fall  
In part abate, that happiness were small;  
For with a race like theirs no chance I see  
Of peace or ease to creatures clad as we.  
Meantime, noise kills not. Be it dapple's bray,  
Or be it not, or be it whose it may,  
And rush those other sounds, that seem by tongues  
Of demons uttered, from whatever lungs,  
Sounds are but sounds; and, till the cause appear,  
We have at least commodious standing here.  
Come fiend, come fury, giant, monster, blast  
From earth or hell, we can but plunge at last.

While thus she spake, I fainter heard the peals,  
For Reynard, close attended at his heels  
By panting dog, tired man, and spattered horse,  
Through mere good fortune, took a different course.  
The flock grew calm again; and I, the road  
Following, that led me to my own abode,  
Much wondered, that the silly sheep had found  
Such cause of terror in an empty sound,  
So sweet to huntsman, gentleman, and hound.

## MORAL.

Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day  
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

## BOADICEA.

AN ODE.

WHEN the British warrior queen,  
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
 Sought with an indignant mien,  
 Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak  
 Sat the Druid, hoary chief;  
 Every burning word he spoke  
 Full of rage, and full of grief.

Princess! if our aged eyes,  
 Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
 'Tis because resentment ties  
 All the terrors of our tongues.

Rome shall perish—write that word  
 In the blood that she has spilt:  
 Perish, hopeless and abhorred,  
 Deep in ruin as in guilt.

Rome, for empire far renowned,  
 Tramples on a thousand states;  
 Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—  
 Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

Other Romans shall arise,  
 Heedless of a soldier's name;  
 Sounds, not arms shall win the prize,  
 Harmony the path to fame.



Then the progeny that springs  
 From the forests of our land,  
 Armed with thunder, clad with wings,  
 Shall a wider world command.

Regions Cæsar never knew  
 Thy posterity shall sway ;  
 Where his eagles never flew,  
 None invincible as they.

Such the bard's prophetic words,  
 Pregnant with celestial fire,  
 Bending as he swept the chords  
 Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,  
 Felt them in her bosom glow ;  
 Rushed to battle, fought, and died ;  
 Dying, hurled them at the foe.

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,  
 Heaven awards the vengeance due ;  
 Empire is on us bestowed,  
 Shame and ruin wait for you.

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## HEROISM.

**T**HERE was a time when Ætna's silent fire  
 Slept unperceived, the mountain yet entire ;  
 When, conscious of no danger from below,  
 She towered a cloud-capt pyramid of snow.

No thunders shook with deep intestine sound  
 The blooming groves that girdled her around.  
 Her unctuous olives, and her purple vines,  
 (Unfelt the fury of those bursting mines)  
 The peasant's hopes, and not in vain, assured,  
 In peace upon her sloping sides matured.  
 When on a day, like that of the last doom,  
 A conflagration lab'ring in her womb,  
 She teemed and heaved with an infernal birth,  
 That shook the circling seas and solid earth.  
 Dark and voluminous the vapours rise,  
 And hang their horrors in the neighb'ring skies,  
 While through the Stygian veil, that blots the day,  
 In dazzling streaks the vivid lightnings play.  
 But oh! what muse. and in what powers of song,  
 Can trace the torrent as it burns along?  
 Havoc and devastation in the van,  
 It marches o'er the prostrate works of man;  
 Vines, olives, herbage, forests disappear,  
 And all the charms of a Sicilian year.

Revolving seasons, fruitless as they pass,  
 See it an uninformed and idle mass;  
 Without a soil t' invite the tiller's care,  
 Or blade, that might redeem it from despair:  
 Yet time at length (what will not time achieve?)  
 Clothes it with earth, and bids the produce live.  
 Once more the spiry myrtle crowns the glade,  
 And ruminating flocks enjoy the shade.  
 O bliss precarious, and unsafe retreats,  
 O charming Paradise of short-lived sweets!  
 The self-same gale, that wafts the fragrance round,  
 Brings to the distant ear a sullen sound;  
 Again the mountain feels th' imprisoned foe,  
 Again pours ruin on the vale below.

Ten thousand swains the wasted scene deplore,  
That only future ages can restore.

Ye monarchs, whom the lure of honour draws,  
Who write in blood the merits of your cause,  
Who strike the blow, then plead your own defence,  
Glory your aim, but justice your pretence ;  
Behold in Ætna's emblematic fires,  
The mischiefs your ambitious pride inspires !

Fast by the stream that bounds your just domain,  
And tells you where ye have a right to reign,  
A nation dwells, not envious of your throne,  
Studious of peace, their neighbours', and their own.  
Ill-fated race ! how deeply must they rue  
Their only crime, vicinity to you !

The trumpet sounds, your legions swarm abroad,  
Through the ripe harvest lies their destined road ;  
At every step, beneath their feet they tread  
The life of multitudes, a nation's bread !  
Earth seems a garden in its loveliest dress  
Before them, and behind a wilderness.  
Famine, and Pestilence, her first-born son,  
Attend to finish what the sword begun ;  
And echoing praises, such as fiends might earn,  
And Folly pays, resound at your return.  
A calm succeeds—but Plenty, with her train  
Of heart-felt joys, succeeds not soon again,  
And years of pining indigence must show  
What scourges are the gods that rule below.

Yet man, laborious man, by slow degrees,  
(Such is his thirst of opulence and ease)  
Plies all the sinews of industrious toil,  
Gleans up the refuse of the gen'ral spoil,  
Rebuilds the towers that smoked upon the plain,  
And the sun gilds the shining spires again.

Increasing commerce and reviving art  
 Renew the quarrel on the conqu'ror's part;  
 And the sad lesson must be learned once more,  
 That wealth within is ruin at the door.  
 What are ye, monarchs, laurelled heroes, say,  
 But Ætnas of the suff'ring world ye sway?  
 Sweet Nature, stripped of her embroidered robe,  
 Deplores the wasted regions of her globe;  
 And stands a witness at Truth's awful bar,  
 To prove you there destroyers as ye are.

O place me in some Heaven-protected isle,  
 Where Peace, and Equity, and Freedom smile;  
 Where no volcano pours his fiery flood,  
 No crested warrior dips his plume in blood;  
 Where Power secures what Industry has won;  
 Where to succeed is not to be undone;  
 A land, that distant tyrants hate in vain,  
 In Britain's isle, beneath a George's reign!

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## ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK,

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN, ANN BODHAM.

O THAT those lips had language! Life has passed  
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
 The same, that oft in childhood solaced me;  
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
 “Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!”  
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
 (Blessed be the art that can immortalize,

The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!  
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,  
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.  
I will obey, not willingly alone,  
But gladly, as the precept were her own:  
And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,  
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone,  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!  
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
What ardently I wished, I long believed,  
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.  
By expectation every day beguiled,  
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,

I learned at last submission to my lot,  
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;  
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the public way,  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,  
'Tis now become a history little known,  
That once we called the pastoral house our own.  
Short-lived possession! but the record fair,  
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced  
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;  
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
The biscuit, or confectionary plum!  
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed  
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed:  
All this, and more endearing still than all,  
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,  
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks,  
That humour interposed too often makes;  
All this still legible in memory's page,  
And still to be so to my latest age,  
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay  
Such honours to thee as my numbers may;  
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
Not scorned in Heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,  
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
I pricked them into paper with a pin,

(And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile)  
Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?  
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—  
But no—what here we call our life is such,  
So little to be loved, and thou so much,  
That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)  
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,  
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,  
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show  
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
While airs impregnated with incense play  
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay;  
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore,  
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"\*  
And thy loved consort on the dang'rous tide  
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.  
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,  
Always from port withheld, always distressed—  
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,  
Sails ripped, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,  
And day by day some current's thwarting force  
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.  
Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he!  
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
My boast is not, that I deduce my birth  
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;

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\* Garth.

But higher far my proud pretensions rise—  
 The son of parents passed into the skies.  
 And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run  
 His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.  
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
 I seemed t' have lived my childhood o'er again ;  
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,  
 Without the sin of violating thine ;  
 And, while the wings of Fancy still are free,  
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
 Thyself removed, thy power to sooth me left.



## FRIENDSHIP.

WHAT virtue, or what mental grace,  
 But men unqualified and base  
     Will boast it their possession ?  
 Profusion apes the nobler part  
 Of liberality of heart,  
     And dulness of discretion.

If every polished gem we find,  
 Illuminating heart or mind,  
     Provoke to imitation ;  
 No wonder friendship does the same,  
 That jewel of the purest flame,  
     Or rather constellation.



No knave but boldly will pretend  
The requisites that form a friend,  
    A real and a sound one ;  
Nor any fool, he would deceive,  
But prove as ready to believe,  
    And dream that he had found one.

Candid, and generous, and just,  
Boys care but little whom they trust,  
    An error soon corrected—  
For who but learns in riper years,  
That man, when smoothest he appears,  
    Is most to be suspected ?

But here again a danger lies,  
Lest, having misapplied our eyes,  
    And taken trash for treasure,  
We should unwarily conclude  
Friendship a false ideal good,  
    A mere Utopian pleasure.

An acquisition rather rare  
Is yet no subject of despair ;  
    Nor is it wise complaining,  
If either on forbidden ground,  
Or where it was not to be found,  
    We sought without attaining.

No friendship will abide the test,  
That stands on sordid interest,  
    Or mean self-love erected ;  
Nor such as may a while subsist,  
Between the sot and sensualist,  
    For vicious ends connected.

Who seeks a friend should come disposed  
T' exhibit in full bloom disclosed  
The graces and the beauties,  
That form the character he seeks,  
For 'tis a union that bespeaks  
Reciprocated duties.

Mutual attention is implied,  
And equal truth on either side,  
And constantly supported ;  
'Tis senseless arrogance t' accuse  
Another of sinister views,  
Our own as much distorted.

But will sincerity suffice ?  
It is indeed above all price,  
And must be made the basis ;  
But every virtue of the soul  
Must constitute the charming whole,  
All shining in their places.

A fretful temper will divide  
The closest knot that may be tied,  
By ceaseless sharp corrosion ;  
A temper passionate and fierce  
May suddenly your joys disperse  
At one immense explosion.

In vain the talkative unite  
In hopes of permanent delight—  
The secret just committed,  
Forgetting its important weight,  
They drop through mere desire to prate,  
And by themselves outwitted.

How bright soe'er the prospect seems,  
All thoughts of friendship are but dreams,  
    If envy chance to creep in ;  
An envious man, if you succeed,  
May prove a dangerous foe indeed,  
    But not a friend worth keeping.

As envy pines at good possessed,  
So jealousy looks forth distressed  
    On good, that seems approaching ;  
And, if success his steps attend,  
Discerns a rival in a friend,  
    And hates him for encroaching.

Hence authors of illustrious name,  
Unless belied by common fame,  
    Are sadly prone to quarrel ;  
They deem the wit a friend displays  
A tax upon their own just praise,  
    And pluck each other's laurel.

A man renowned for repartee  
Will seldom scruple to make free  
    With friendship's finest feeling,  
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,  
And say he wounded you in jest,  
    By way of balm for healing.

Whoever keeps an open ear  
For tattlers, will be sure to hear  
    The trumpet of contention ;  
Aspersion is the babbler's trade,  
To listen is to lend him aid,  
    And rush into dissension.

A friendship, that in frequent fits  
 Of controversial rage emits  
     The sparks of disputation,  
 Like hand-in-hand insurance plate  
 Most unavoidably creates  
     The thought of conflagration.

Some fickle creatures boast a soul  
 True as a needle to the pole,  
     Their humour yet so various—  
 They manifest their whole life through  
 The needle's deviations too,  
     Their love is so precarious.

The great and small but rarely meet  
 On terms of amity complete;  
     Plebeians must surrender  
 And yield so much to noble folk,  
 It is combining fire with smoke,  
     Obscurity with splendour.

Some are so placid and serene  
 (As Irish bogs are always green)  
     They sleep secure from waking;  
 And are indeed a bog, that bears  
 Your unparticipated cares  
     Unmoved and without quaking.

Courtier and patriot cannot mix  
 Their het'rogenous politics  
     Without an effervescence,  
 Like that of salts with lemon juice,  
 Which does not yet like that produce  
     A friendly coalescence.

Religion should extinguish strife,  
And make a calm of human life ;  
But friends that chance to differ  
On points, which God has left at large,  
How freely will they meet and charge !  
No combatants are stiffer.

To prove at last my main intent  
Needs no expense of argument,  
No cutting and contriving—  
Seeking a real friend we seem  
To adopt the chymist's golden dream,  
With still less hope of thriving.

Sometimes the fault is all our own,  
Some blemish in due time made known  
By trespass or omission ;  
Sometimes occasion brings to light  
Our friend's defect long hid from sight,  
And even from suspicion.

Then judge yourself, and prove your man  
As circumspectly as you can,  
And, having made election,  
Beware no negligence of yours,  
Such as a friend but ill endures,  
Enfeeble his affection.

That secrets are a sacred trust,  
That friends should be sincere and just,  
That constancy befits them,  
Are observations on the case,  
That savour much of common-place,  
And all the world admits them.

But 'tis not timber, lead, and stone,  
 An architect requires alone,  
     To finish a fine building—  
 The palace were but half complete,  
 If he could possibly forget  
     The carving and the gilding.

The man that hails you Tom or Jack,  
 And proves by thumps upon your back  
     How he esteems your merit,  
 Is such a friend, that one had need  
 Be very much his friend indeed,  
     To pardon or to bear it.

As similarity of mind,  
 Or something not to be defined,  
     First fixes our attention ;  
 So manners decent and polite,  
 The same we practised at first sight  
     Must save it from declension.

Some act upon this prudent plan,  
 " Say little, and hear all you can."—  
     Safe policy, but hateful—  
 So barren sands imbibe the shower,  
 But render neither fruit nor flower,  
     Unpleasant and ungrateful.

The man I trust, if shy to me,  
 Shall find me as reserved as he ;  
     No subterfuge or pleading  
 Shall win my confidence again ;  
 I will by no means entertain  
     A spy on my proceeding.

These samples—for alas ! at last  
 These are but samples, and a taste  
     Of evils yet unmentioned—  
 May prove the task a task indeed,  
 In which 'tis much if we succeed,  
     However well intentioned.

Pursue the search, and you will find  
 Good sense and knowledge of mankind  
     To be at least expedient,  
 And, after summing all the rest,  
 Religion ruling in the breast  
     A principal ingredient.

The noblest Friendship ever shown  
 The Saviour's history makes known,  
     Though some have turned and turned it;  
 And, whether being crazed or blind,  
 Or seeking with a biassed mind,  
     Have not, it seems, discerned it.

O Friendship, if my soul forego  
 Thy dear delights while here below ;  
     To mortify and grieve me,  
 May I myself at last appear  
 Unworthy, base, and insincere,  
     Or may my friend deceive me !



THE

ENCHANTMENT DISSOLVED.

BLINDED in youth by Satan's arts  
 The world to our unpractised hearts  
     A flattering prospect shows ;

Our fancy forms a thousand schemes  
Of delights and golden dreams,  
And undisturbed repose.

So in the desert's dreary waste,  
By magic power produced in haste,  
(As ancient fables say)  
Castles, and groves, and music sweet,  
The senses of the traveller meet,  
And stop him in his way.

But while he listens with surprise,  
The charm dissolves, the vision dies,  
'Twas but enchanted ground ;  
Thus if the Lord our spirit touch,  
The world, which promised us so much,  
A wilderness is found.

At first we start and feel distressed,  
Convinced we never can have rest  
In such a wretched place ;  
But He whose mercy breaks the charm,  
Reveals his own Almighty arm,  
And bids us seek his face.

Then we begin to live indeed,  
When from our sin and bondage freed  
By this beloved Friend ;  
We follow him from day to day,  
Assured of grace through all the way  
And glory at the end.



## LIGHT SHINING OUT OF DARKNESS.

God moves in a mysterious way,  
 His wonders to perform ;  
 He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
 Of never-failing skill,  
 He treasures up his bright designs,  
 And works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
 The clouds ye so much dread  
 Are big with mercy, and shall break  
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
 But trust him for his grace ;  
 Behind a frowning Providence  
 He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,  
 Unfolding every hour ;  
 The bud may have a bitter taste,  
 But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,\*  
 And scan his work in vain ;  
 God is his own interpreter,  
 And he will make it plain.

---

\* John xiii. 7.

## TEMPTATION.

THE billows swell, the winds are high,  
Clouds overcast my wintry sky ;  
Out of the depths to thee I call,  
My fears are great, my strength is small

O Lord, the pilot's part perform,  
And guide and guard me through the storm ;  
Defend me from each threatening ill,  
Control the waves, say, " Peace be still."

Amidst the roaring of the sea,  
My soul still hangs her hope on thee ;  
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,  
Is all that saves me from despair.

Dangers of every shape and name  
Attend the followers of the Lamb,  
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,  
And leave it to return no more.

Though tempest-tossed and half a wreck,  
My Saviour through the floods I seek ;  
Let neither winds nor stormy main  
Force back my shattered bark again.

## SUBMISSION.

O LORD, my best desire fulfil,  
 And help me to resign  
 Life, health, and comfort, to thy will,  
 And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,  
 Whose love forbids my fears?  
 Or tremble at the gracious hand  
 That wipes away my tears?

No, let me rather freely yield  
 What most I prize to Thee;  
 Who never hast a good withheld,  
 Or wilt withhold from me.

Thy favour all my journey through  
 Thou art engaged to grant;  
 What else I want, or think I do,  
 'Tis better still to want.

Wisdom and mercy guide my way,  
 Shall I resist them both?  
 A poor blind creature of a day,  
 And crushed before the moth!

But ah! my inward spirit cries,  
 Still bind me to thy sway;  
 Else the next cloud that veils my skies,  
 Drives all these thoughts away.



Green as the bay tree, ever green,  
With its new foliage on,  
The gay, the thoughtless, have I seen,  
I passed—and they were gone.

Read, ye that run, the awful truth,  
With which I charge my page ;  
A worm is in the bud of youth,  
And at the root of age.

No present health can health ensure  
For yet an hour to come ;  
No medicine, though it oft can cure,  
Can always balk the tomb.

And O! that, humble as my lot,  
And scorned as is my strain,  
These truths, though known, too much forgot,  
I may not teach in vain.

So prays your clerk with all his heart,  
And, ere he quits the pen,  
Begs *you* for once to take *his* part,  
And answer all—Amen !

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1788.

~~~~~  
Quod adest, memento

Componere æquus. Cætera fluminis

Ritu feruntur.

HORACE.

Improve the present hour, for all beside

Is a mere feather on a torrent's tide.

~~~~~

COULD I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage  
 To whom the rising year shall prove his last,  
 As I can number in my punctual page,  
 And item down the victims of the past ;

How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,  
 On which the press might stamp him next to die :  
 And, reading here his sentence, how replete  
 With anxious meaning, heaven-ward turn his eye !

Time then would seem more precious than the joys  
 In which he sports away the treasure now ;  
 And prayer more seasonable than the noise  
 Of drunkards, or the music-drawing bow.

Then doubtless many a trifler, on the brink  
 Of this world's hazardous and headlong shore,  
 Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think,  
 Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

Ah self-deceived ! Could I prophetic say  
 Who next is fated, and who next to fall,  
 The rest might then seem privileged to play ;  
 But, naming *none*, the Voice now speaks to ALL.

Observe the dappled foresters, how light  
 They bound and airy o'er the sunny glade—  
 One falls—the rest, wide-scattered with affright,  
 Vanish at once into the darkest shade.

Had we their wisdom, should we, often warned,  
 Still need repeated warnings, and at last,  
 A thousand awful admonitions scorued,  
 Die self-accused of life run all to waste ?

Sad waste ! for which no after-thrift atones :  
 The grave admits no cure for guilt or sin :  
 Dew-drops may deck the turf that hides the bones,  
 But tears of godly grief ne'er flow within.

Learn then, ye living ! by the mouths be taught  
 Of all these sepulchres, instructors true,  
 That, soon or late, death also is your lot,  
 And the next opening grave may yawn for you.



## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1789.

~~~~~  
 —Placidaque ibi demum morte quievit. VIRG.  
 There calm at length he breathed his soul away,  
 ~~~~~

“ O MOST delightful hour by man  
 Experienced here below,  
 The hour that terminates his span,  
 His folly, and his woe !

“ Worlds should not bribe me back to tread  
Again life’s dreary waste,  
To see again my day o’erspread  
With all the gloomy past.

“ My home henceforth is in the skies,  
Earth, seas, and sun, adieu !  
All Heaven unfolded to my eyes,  
I have no sight for you.”

So spake Aspasio, firm possessed  
Of faith’s supporting rod,  
Then breathed his soul into its rest,  
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few  
Sincere on virtue’s side ;  
And all his strength from Scripture drew,  
To hourly use applied.

That rule he prized, by that he feared,  
He hated, hoped, and loved ;  
Nor ever frowned, or sad appeared,  
But when his heart had roved.

For he was frail, as thou or I,  
And evil felt within ;  
But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,  
And loathed the thought of sin.

Such lived Aspasio : and at last  
Called up from Earth to Heaven,  
The gulf of death triumphant passed,  
By gales of blessing driven.



*His joys be mine, each Reader cries,  
 When my last hour arrives :  
 They shall be yours, my Verse replies,  
 Such only be your lives.*



## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION.

FOR THE YEAR 1790.



*Ne commonentem recta sperne. BUCHANAN.  
 Despise not my good counsel.*



HE who sits from day to day,  
 Where the prisoned lark is hung,  
 Heedless of his loudest lay,  
 Hardly knows than he has sung.

Where the watchman in his round  
 Nightly lifts his voice on high,  
 None, accustomed to the sound,  
 Wakes the sooner for his cry,

So your verse-man, I, and clerk,  
 Yearly in my song proclaim  
 Death at hand—yourselves his mark—  
 And the foe's unerring aim.

Duly at my time I come,  
 Publishing to all aloud—  
 Soon the grave must be your home,  
 And your only suit, a shroud.

But the monitory strain,  
Oft repeated in your ears,  
Seems to sound too much in vain,  
Wins no notice, wakes no fears.

Can a truth, by all confessed  
Of such magnitude and weight,  
Grow, by being oft impressed,  
Trivial as a parrot's prate?

Pleasure's call attention wins,  
Hear it often as we may ;  
New as ever seem our sins,  
Though committed every day.

Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell—  
These alone, so often heard,  
No more move us than the bell,  
When some stranger is interred.

O then, ere the turf or tomb  
Cover us from every eye,  
Spirit of instruction come,  
Make us learn that we must die.

ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,  
FOR THE YEAR 1792.

~~~~~  
Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari! VIRG.

Happy the mortal, who has traced effects  
To their first cause, cast fear beneath his feet,  
And Death and roaring Hell's voracious fires!

~~~~~  
THANKLESS for favours from on high,  
Man thinks he fades too soon;  
Though 'tis his privilege to die,  
Would he improve the boon.

But he not wise enough to scan  
His best concerns aright,  
Would gladly stretch life's little span  
To ages, if he might:

To ages in a world of pain,  
To ages, where he goes  
Galled by afflictions heavy chain,  
And hopeless of repose.

Strange fondness of the human heart,  
Enamoured of its harm!  
Strange world, that cost it so much smart  
And still has power to charm.

Whence has the world her magic power?  
Why deem we death a foe?  
Recoil from weary life's best hour,  
And covet longer woe?

The cause is Conscience—Conscience oft  
 Her tale of guilt renews :  
 Her voice is terrible though soft,  
 And dread of death ensues.

Then anxious to be longer spared  
 Man mourns his fleeting breath :  
 All evils then seem light, compared  
 With the approach of Death.

'Tis judgment shakes him ; there's the fear,  
 That prompts the wish to stay :  
 He has incurred a long arrear,  
 And must despair to pay.

*Pay !*—follow Christ, and all is paid ;  
 His death your peace ensures ;  
 Think on the grave where *he* was laid,  
 And calm descend to *yours*.

---

## ON A SIMILAR OCCASION,

FOR THE YEAR 1793.

~~~~~  
 De sacris autem hæc sit una sententia, ut conserventur.

CIC. DE LEG.

But let us all concur in this one sentiment, that things sacred  
 be inviolate.

~~~~~  
 HE lives, who lives to God alone,  
 And all are dead beside ;  
 For other source than God is none  
 Whence life can be supplied.

To live to God is to requite  
His love as best we may ;  
To make his precepts our delight,  
His promises our stay.

But, life, within a narrow ring  
Of giddy joys comprised,  
Is falsely named, and no such thing,  
But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,  
Who only live to prove  
For what poor toys they can disclaim  
An endless life above ?

Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel ;  
Much menaced, nothing dread ;  
Have wounds which only God can heal,  
Yet never ask his aid ?

Who deem his house a useless place,  
Faith, want of common sense ;  
And ardour in the Christian race,  
A hypocrite's pretence ?

Who trample order ; and the day,  
Which God asserts his own,  
Dishonour with unhallowed play,  
And worship chance alone ?

If scorn of God's commands, impressed  
On word and deed, imply  
The better part of man unblessed  
With life that cannot die ;

Such want it, and that want uncured  
 Till man resigns his breath,  
 Speaks him a criminal, assured  
 Of everlasting death.

Sad period to a pleasant course !  
 Yet so will God repay  
 Sabbaths profaned without remorse,  
 And mercy cast away.

---

## INSCRIPTION

FOR THE TOMB OF MR. HAMILTON.

PAUSE here, and think : a monitory rhyme  
 Demands one moment of thy fleeting time.

Consult life's silent clock, thy bounding vein ;  
 Seems it to say—" Health here has long to reign ?"  
 Hast thou the vigour of thy youth ? an eye  
 That beams delight ? a heart untaught to sigh ?  
 Yet fear. Youth, oft-times healthful and at ease,  
 Anticipates a day it never sees ;  
 And many a tomb, like HAMILTON'S, aloud  
 Exclaims, " Prepare thee for an early shroud."

---

## EPITAPH ON A HARE.

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,  
 Nor swifter greyhound follow,  
 Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,  
 Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo.

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,  
Who, nursed with tender care,  
And to domestic bounds confined,  
Was still a wild Jack-hare.

Though duly from my hand he took  
His pittance every night,  
He did it with a jealous look,  
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,  
And milk, and oats, and straw ;  
Thistles, or lettuces instead,  
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,  
On pippins' russet peel,  
And, when his juicy salads failed,  
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,  
Whereon he loved to bound,  
To skip and gambol like a fawn,  
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,  
For then he lost his fear,  
But most before approaching showers,  
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons  
He thus saw steal away,  
Dozing out all his idle noons,  
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,  
 For he would oft beguile  
 My heart of thoughts that made it ache,  
 And force me to a smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade  
 He finds his long last home,  
 And waits, in snug concealment laid,  
 Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks,  
 From which no care can save,  
 And, partner once of Tiney's box,  
 Must soon partake his grave.



EPITAPHIUM ALTERUM.

Hic etiam jacet,  
 Qui totum novennium vixit,  
 Puss.  
 Siste paulisper,  
 Qui præteriturus es,  
 Et tecum sic reputa—  
 Hunc neque canis venaticus,  
 Nec plumbum missile,  
 Nec laqueus,  
 Nec imbres nimii  
 Confecere :  
 Tamen mortuus est—  
 Et moriar ego.



*The following Account of the Treatment of his Hares, was inserted by Mr. Cowper in the Gentleman's Magazine, whence it is transcribed.*

IN the year 1774, being much indisposed both in mind and body, incapable of diverting myself either with company or books, and yet in a condition that made some diversion necessary, I was glad of any thing that would engage my attention without fatiguing it. The children of a neighbour of mine had a leveret given them for a plaything; it was at that time about three months old. Understanding better how to tease the poor creature than to feed it, and soon becoming weary of their charge, they readily consented that their father, who saw it pining and growing leaner every day, should offer it to my acceptance. I was willing enough to take the prisoner under my protection, perceiving that, in the management of such an animal, and in the attempt to tame it, I should find just that sort of employment which my case required. It was soon known among the neighbours that I was pleased with the present; and the consequence was, that in a short time I had as many leverets offered to me as would have stocked a paddock. I undertook the care of three, which it is necessary that I should here distinguish by the names I gave them—Puss, Tiney, and Bess. Notwithstanding the two feminine appellatives, I must inform you that they were all males. Immediately commencing carpenter, I built them houses to sleep in: each had a separate apartment, so contrived, that their ordure would pass through the bottom of it; an earthen pan placed under each received whatsoever fell, which being duly emptied and washed, they were thus kept perfectly sweet and clean. In the day-time they had the range of a hall, and at night retired each to his own bed, never intruding into that of another.

Puss grew presently familiar, would leap into my lap, raise himself upon his hinder feet, and bite the hair from my temples. He would suffer me to take him up, and to carry him about in my arms, and has more than once fallen asleep upon my knee. He was ill three days, during which time I nursed him, kept him apart from his fellows, that they might not molest him, (for, like many other wild animals, they persecute one of their own species that is sick,) and by constant care, and trying him with a variety of herbs, restored him to perfect health. No creature could be more grateful than my patient after his recovery; a sentiment which he most significantly expressed by licking my hand, first the back of it, then the palm, then every finger separately, then between all the fingers, as if anxious to leave no part of it unsaluted; a ceremony which he never performed but once again upon a similar occasion. Finding him extremely tractable,

I made it my custom to carry him always after breakfast into the garden, where he hid himself generally under the leaves of a cucumber vine, sleeping or chewing the cud till evening; in the leaves also of that vine he found a favourite repast. I had not long habituated him to this taste of liberty, before he began to be impatient for the return of the time when he might enjoy it. He would invite me to the garden by drumming upon my knee, and by a look of such expression, as it was not possible to misinterpret. If this rhetoric did not immediately succeed, he would take the skirt of my coat between his teeth, and pull at it with all his force. Thus puss might be said to be perfectly tamed; the shyness of his nature was done away, and on the whole it was visible by many symptoms, which I have not room to enumerate, that he was happier in human society, than when shut up with his natural companions.

Not so Tiney: upon him the kindest treatment had not the least effect. He too was sick, and in his sickness had an equal share of my attention; but if, after his recovery, I took the liberty to stroke him, he would grunt, strike with his fore feet, spring forward, and bite. He was however very entertaining in his way; even his surliness was matter of mirth; and in his play he preserved such an air of gravity, and performed his feats with such a solemnity of manner, that in him too I had an agreeable companion.

Bess, who died soon after he was full grown, and whose death was occasioned by his being turned into his box, which had been washed, while it was yet damp, was a hare of great humour and drollery. Puss was tamed by gentle usage; Tiney was not to be tamed at all; and Bess had a courage and confidence that made him tame from the beginning. I always admitted them into the parlour after supper, when, the carpet affording their feet a firm hold, they would frisk, and bound, and play a thousand gambols, in which Bess, being remarkably strong and fearless, was always superior to the rest, and proved himself the Vestris of the party. One evening the cat, being in the same room, had the hardiness to pat Bess upon the cheek, an indignity which he resented by drumming upon her back with such violence, that the cat was happy to escape from under his paws, and hide herself.

I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their countenances were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was. It is said that a shepherd, however numerous his flock, soon becomes so familiar with their features, that he can, by that indication only, distinguish each from all the rest; and yet, to a common observer, the difference is hardly perceptible. I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand of them, no

two could be found exactly similar: a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had an opportunity to observe it. These creatures have a singular sagacity in discovering the minutest alteration that is made in the place to which they are accustomed, and instantly apply their nose to the examination of a new object. A small hole being burnt in the carpet, it was mended with a patch, and that patch in a moment underwent the strictest scrutiny. They seem too to be very much directed by the smell in the choice of their favourites; to some persons, though they saw them daily, they could never be reconciled, and would even scream when they attempted to touch them; but a miller coming in engaged their affections at once; his powdered coat had charms that were irresistible. It is no wonder that my intimate acquaintance with these specimens of the kind has taught me to hold the sportsman's amusement in abhorrence; he little knows what amiable creatures he persecutes, of what gratitude they are capable, how cheerful they are in their spirits, what enjoyment they have of life, and that, impressed as they seem with a peculiar dread of man, it is only because man gives them peculiar cause for it.

That I may not be tedious, I will just give a short summary of those articles of diet that suit them best.

I take it to be a general opinion that they graze; but it is an erroneous one, at least grass is not their staple; they seem rather to use it medicinally, soon quitting it for leaves of almost any kind. Sowthistle, dandelion, and lettuce, are their favourite vegetables, especially the last. I discovered by accident, that fine white sand is in great estimation with them; I suppose as a digestive. It happened that I was cleaning a bird-cage while the hares were with me; I placed a pot filled with such sand upon the floor, which being at once directed to by a strong instinct, they devoured voraciously; since that time I have generally taken care to see them well supplied with it. They account green corn a delicacy, both blade and stalk, but the ear they seldom eat; straw of any kind, especially wheat-straw, is another of their dainties; they will feed greedily upon oats, but if furnished with clean straw never want them; it serves them also for a bed, and, if shaken up daily, will be kept sweet and dry for a considerable time. They do not indeed require aromatic herbs, but will eat a small quantity of them with great relish, and are particularly fond of the plant called musk; they seem to resemble sheep in this, that, if their pasture be too succulent, they are very subject to the rot; to prevent which, I always made bread their principal nourishment, and, filling a pan with it cut into small squares, placed it every evening in their chambers, for they feed only at evening and in the night; during the winter when vegetables were not to be got, I mingled this mess of bread with shreds of carrot, adding to it the rind of apples cut extremely thin; for,

though they are fond of the pairing, the apple itself disgusts them. These however not being a sufficient substitute for the juice of summer herbs, they must at this time be supplied with water ; but so placed, that they cannot overset it into their beds. I must not omit that occasionally they are much pleased with twigs of hawthorn, and of the common brier, eating even the very wood when it is of considerable thickness.

Bess, I have said, died young : Tiney lived to be nine years old, and died at last, I have reason to think, of some hurt in his loins by a fall ; Puss is still living, and has just completed his tenth year, discovering no signs of decay, nor even of age, except that he is grown more discreet and less frolicsome than he was. I cannot conclude without observing, that I have lately introduced a dog to his acquaintance, a spaniel that had never seen a hare, to a hare that had never seen a spaniel. I did it with great caution, but there was no real need of it. Puss discovered no token of fear, nor Marquis the least symptom of hostility. There is therefore, it should seem, no natural antipathy between dog and hare, but the pursuit of the one occasions the flight of the other, and the dog pursues because he is trained to it ; they eat bread at the same time out of the same hand, and are in all respects sociable and friendly.

I should not do complete justice to my subject, did I not add, that they have no ill scent belonging to them, that they are indefatigably nice in keeping themselves clean, for which purpose nature has furnished them with a brush under each foot, and they are never infested by any vermin.

May 28, 1784.

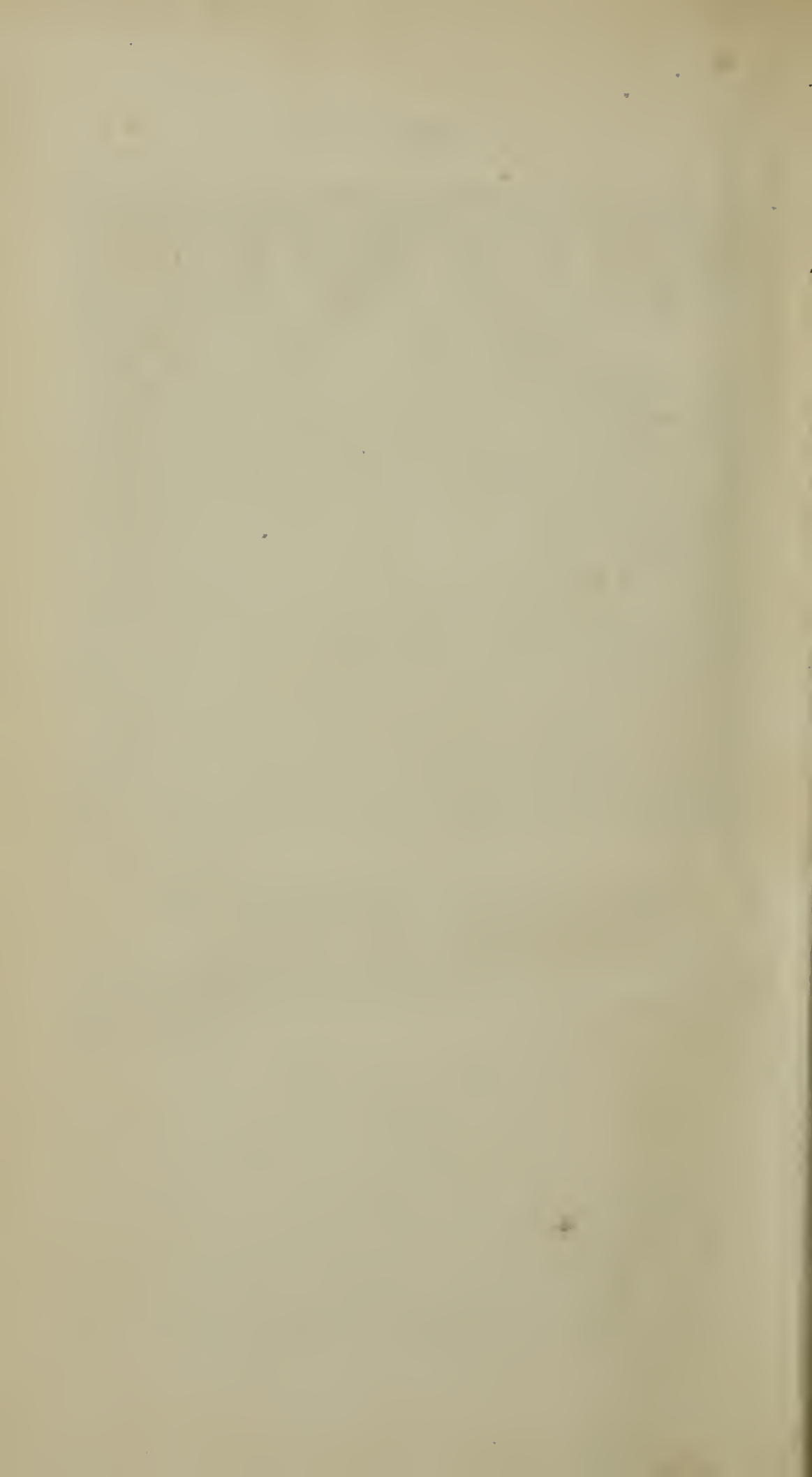
*Memorandum found among Mr. Cowper's papers.*

Tuesday, March 9, 1786.

This day died poor Puss, aged eleven years eleven months, He died between twelve and one at noon, of mere old age, and apparently without pain.

FINIS.











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